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A faggot of torches



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A BUNCH OF EVERLASTINGS  
A CASKET OF CAMEOS  
A HANDFUL OF STARS  
A REEL OF RAINBOW  
FACES IN THE FIRE  
THE CRYSTAL POINTERS  
THE GOLDEN MILESTONE  
THE HOME OF THE ECHOES  
THE LUGGAGE OF LIFE  
THE OTHER SIDE OF THE HILL  
MOUNTAINS IN THE MIST  
MUSHROOMS ON THE MOOR  
RUBBLE AND ROSELEAVES  
SHADOWS ON THE WALL  
THE SILVER SHADOW  
THE UTTERMOST STAR  
WISPS OF WILDFIRE



# A FAGGOT OF TORCHES

TEXTS THAT MADE HISTORY

By  
F. W. BOREHAM



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## BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

WE need a new *Philosophy of Words*. It has been the fashion, of late years, to belittle their value. 'Words! Words! Words!' we say, impatiently, with Hamlet; and certainly they do at times grow wearisome. They seem so pitifully futile, so ridiculously cheap! And yet——!

Words represent a vital element in history. Is there no subtle significance in the record that tells how, when God created the heaven and the earth, He employed *words* as the tools best suited to His task? 'Let there be light!' He said, and there was light. He *spoke* and it was *done*.

In this book and in its three predecessors—*A Bunch of Everlastings*, *A Handful of Stars*, and *A Casket of Cameos*—I have endeavoured to show that the principle has never ceased to operate. Through the agency of words—words as divine and as imperative as the awful fiat that, on earth's primal morning, broke the silence of eternity—darkness is being continually dispelled and new worlds called into being. By means of some sublime word—startling, piercing, convincing, alluring—a new man is made, and the new man ushers in a new age. Were it not for those words—words of pity and grace and life everlasting—the world would still be without form and void and

darkness would be upon the face of the deep. But because of those words—those ‘Texts That Made History’—there is sunlight on every shore! And thus, before the wondering eyes of each successive generation, the ancient drama of Creation is repeated on a really imposing and majestic scale.

FRANK W. BOREHAM.

ARMADALE,

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA.

*Christmas, 1925.*

## I

### ALLEN GARDINER'S TEXT

#### I

ALLEN GARDINER never hesitated for a moment as to the choice of a profession. In those anxious and perilous days, with the country threatened by the horrors of a Napoleonic invasion, Lord Nelson was the idol and the hope of the nation. At that great sailor's shrine, Allen offered the boyish hero-worship of an intense and passionate nature. He was only eleven when England was stirred, as she had never been stirred before, by the news of Trafalgar—the dramatic victory of the fleet, the deliverance of the nation, and the hero's glorious death. Every chord of the boy's soul vibrated with the tense emotion of that tremendous day; and, within three years, he himself had entered the Navy.

And here he is on H.M.S. *Fortune*! He has been a year at sea and has to-day received the heavy tidings of the death of his mother. The flood of recollection that surges through his mind on receipt of the news serves to emphasize the immensity of the chasm that yawns between the new life and the old one. In the early part of the nineteenth century the Navy was a brutalizing and demoralizing school

for boys. But the black-edged letter sends Allen's memory flying back across the years. He thinks of the quiet home in Berkshire; the walks in the woods by his father's side and the evenings at the fireside with his mother. He is ashamed of the impatience with which he fretted to leave it all and get away to sea.

But such sentiments quickly evaporate. The death of his mother makes him feel that the strongest tie that bound him to purity and goodness has now snapped: he is free to obey his wildest impulses and to follow the dictates of his own sweet will.

## II

To the end of his life Commander Gardiner never cared to speak of the years that intervened between his fifteenth and his twenty-fifth. And yet some things happened in those days which his father recounted to the neighbours with obvious pride. In 1814, at the age of twenty, Allen had distinguished himself in action and had been sent home in charge of a prize-ship. A few months later he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant; and other honours fell quickly upon him. But, when reminded of these achievements, the Captain used to shake his head. 'I spent those years,' he would say, 'amidst the headstrong excitements of youth'; and, although he believed himself to have been greatly forgiven, he could not find it in his heart to forgive himself.

During those bitter years he heaped scorn and



derision on the faith of his childhood: with a gay and careless laugh he cut himself adrift from all the old moorings. To read the Bible, he averred, was an act of senseless folly. And yet, as his biographer is careful to point out, there are times in the midst of his gaiety when his better nature asserts itself. He himself has told us how, on one occasion, he resolved to give the Bible another chance. But how is he to get one? With great trepidation he approaches a bookseller's shop. When he reaches the door, however, he sees other customers at the counter. He cannot bear to be overheard asking for a Bible! He therefore paces the street, waiting for the shop to empty. But, as soon as one customer comes out, another goes in! At length he sees his chance; rushes in; buys the book; and spends the rest of the day wondering what the bookseller must think of him! Like the straw that tells which way the waters are moving, the incident is just enough to show that his father's fervent petitions and his mother's gentle entreaties are never quite at rest in the young sailor's soul. But that is as far as it goes. For, away down in Berkshire, the old man hears of his son's wayward and impetuous behaviour; and hangs his head. Is *this* the boy with whom, hand in hand, he walked across the fields? Is *this* the boy with whom he had so often kneeled in family worship? Such things are hard to understand. But, just as the mystery is deepening into impenetrable gloom, a letter arrives from Penang

which floods the old man's path with sunshine. It is the letter in which Allen tells his father of his conversion!

## III

That conversion came about—as most conversions do—in the most unlikely and surprising way. Whilst H.M.S. *Leander* lies at anchor in the Straits of Malacca in 1820, a mail arrives from England which brings two letters for Lieut. Allen Gardiner. One, full of grave reproof, is from his father: it tells of the extreme anxiety that his son's conduct is causing him. The other is from an old lady, an intimate friend of his mother's. Strange as it must seem, it is this letter that transforms everything. There is such a thing as *Conversion by Correspondence*: Bishop Hannington entered the Kingdom of Heaven that way. So does Allen Gardiner. 'Nothing,' as Miss Charlotte M. Yonge observes, 'nothing would have seemed more hopeless than the chance that a letter from a religious old lady would make an impression on a dashing young naval officer; yet Allen Gardiner always considered the receipt of that letter as the turning-point of his life.' The letter begins apologetically: the writer cannot bear to seem censorious: not for worlds would she presume to lecture our young lieutenant. Yet, for his mother's sake, she begs him to read with patience her earnest plea. She warns him of the deadening consequences of sin: she reminds him that it was to save man from sin that the Son of God lived and

died: and she tells him that what he needs, above all else, is *a new heart*. 'Remember,' she says, 'this is not *my* phrase; it is the very word of Scripture. And unless we have this new heart, this clean heart, this heart of flesh given in exchange for a heart of stone, we cannot believe effectually.' She quotes from David: *Create in me a clean heart, O Lord*, and from Ezekiel: *A new heart will I give you*. 'You will perhaps ask,' she continues, 'how this *new heart* can be obtained? It is the gift of God exclusively: none but He can create it.' The letter throbs with the note of urgency. 'Nothing that is unholy or impure,' she says, 'can enter heaven. The change spoken of by the Saviour: *Ye must be born again*, must take place while we live; for, as we are found in death, we shall for ever be: there is no repentance in the grave nor pardon offered to the dead.' And she closes, as she began, on a personal note. 'It is probable, dear Allen, that you and I will never meet again on earth; and, if not, let me hope that we shall meet in that place where all must hope to be, clothed in the Saviour's perfect righteousness.'

Allen Gardiner reads the letter again and again and again. It seems more impressive and appealing with each perusal. He makes copies of it, one of which—together with a Bible that he bought at the time—he carries with him in all his subsequent voyages.

## IV

*A new heart! A new heart!*  
*A new heart will I give you!*  
*Create in me a clean heart, O God!*

Allen Gardiner's *new heart* is no less high and no less brave than the old one; but it is more lowly, more penitent. As a light-hearted boy he longed to follow in the glorious footsteps of Lord Nelson; as a devout Christian he still aspires to serve where the perils are the thickest, where the hazards are the greatest and where the obstacles are most insuperable. He will consecrate his nautical skill to the most sublime ends! He will be the pioneer of the missionary! He will penetrate earth's darkest continents—Africa and South America—in order to open up a way for the Cross! He will be a har-binger and a pathfinder among the most barbarous and degraded races of mankind!

And yet, whilst cherishing this audacious dream—a dream that ultimately cost him his life—he carries in his breast a very lowly and a very contrite heart. 'The last time I visited this colony,' he writes from South Africa, 'I was walking in the broad way and hastening, by rapid strides, to the brink of eternal ruin. Blessed be His name who loved me and gave Himself for me, a great change has been wrought in my heart.' And, at sea, a month later, he asks: 'What return shall I make to the Lord for so unmerited a display of His good-



ness? After years of ingratitude, blasphemy, and rebellion, I have at last been melted! Alas, how slow and reluctant have I been to admit the heavenly Guest who stood knocking without! Nor had He ever been received had not He Himself prepared the way!

*A new heart! A new heart!* Was ever heart so high, so dauntless, so destitute of fear? Was ever heart so humble, so tender, so penitent?

## v

*A new heart! A new heart!*

*Create in me a clean heart, O God!*

Allen Gardiner's *new heart* is no less stout, and no less stalwart, than the old one; but it is more unselfish, more pure. Jesus said that it is *the pure in heart who see God*; and certainly Allen Gardiner caught that beatific vision.

As a small boy, eager to follow Nelson, he taught himself to endure hardship. Before retiring one night, his mother came, candle in hand, to Allen's room to give her sleeping boy his good-night kiss. To her astonishment she found the bed undisturbed: it had not been occupied. Glancing round the room in alarm, she discovered Allen fast asleep on the floor. He explained next morning that he expected to live a rough life, with constant privations, and he wanted to get ready for it!

In those early days he toughened his young sinews and accustomed his body to hardship in the

hope that, later on, he might win for himself swift promotion, cover his name with the lustre of a fair renown, and, perhaps, die, like Nelson, in a blaze of glory.

Later on, he is just as willing to endure hunger and thirst, discomfort and fatigue; but he is eager to suffer in silence and, if needs be, to die in obscurity. He thirsts neither for reward nor for fame. He endures as *seeing Him who is invisible*—the sublime prerogative of the pure-hearted. Taking the whole world as the sphere of his activities, he pierces the interior of Africa and dares a thousand deaths among Hottentots, Kaffirs, Zulus, and Bushmen. We catch fitful glimpses of him, now intervening between hostile tribes; now undertaking a perilous march among mountains reputed to be impassable; and anon lying at the point of starvation among the reeds of the swampy river-bed, listening to the snorting and grunting of the hippopotami around him. At different stages of his adventurous career we find him at Tahiti, at Borneo, at Papua, at the most outlandish places; but ever with one end in view—to blaze a trail along which the missionary may bring to the most benighted the light of the everlasting gospel. He makes his way to the Falkland Islands, and, from that chilly outpost, looks wistfully across at the snow-capped and storm-swept coasts of Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego. ‘The Falkland Islands,’ says Miss Charlotte M. Yonge, ‘are dreary enough;

but they are a paradise compared with that desolate fag-end of the Western world towards which Allen Gardiner now turned his face. Moreover, the Fuegians are as degraded a people as any on the face of the earth and are churlishly inhospitable to strangers. Still, to seek the most hopeless and uncultivated was always Commander Gardiner's object.' And so he sails into the blizzard; crosses the narrow stretch of snow-swept sea; and, with a smile on his fine face, goes to his tragic death!

*A new heart! A new heart!* Was ever heart so valiant, so indomitable, so stout? Was ever heart so disinterested, so unselfish, so pure?

## VI

*A new heart ! A new heart!*

*A new heart will I give you!*

*Create in me a clean heart, O God!*

Allen Gardiner's *new heart* is no less blithe, no less gay, than the old one; but it is more persistent, more patient.

He literally died singing. The annals of adventure contain few records more pathetic than the story of those last dreadful weeks on the cruel coast. The heroes are seven in number. Their ship is disabled; their powder is wet; their nets are torn to tatters by floating ice; their stores are exhausted. They are starving. John Badcock is the first to die; and he begs his companions to sing as his soul passes. One by one the others close their

eyes and yield their spirits back to God. Two only are left—Maidment and Gardiner. For a few days the captain is able to hobble, on a pair of roughly-fashioned crutches, to the cavern in which his comrade lies: he himself is occupying an open boat on the beach. And then——! Nobody will ever know which of the two died first.

The relief expedition found the two unburied bodies: Maidment's in the cavern and Gardiner's beside the boat: he was evidently too weak to clamber back into it. On the rocks, Gardiner—anxious that his friend should be found—had painted a hand pointing to the mouth of the cavern; and underneath, 'Psalm lxii, 5-8.' The words are these:

*My soul, wait thou only upon God: for my expectation is from Him. . . . Trust in Him at all times, ye people; pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us.*

Near by, the relief expedition found the priceless records that Allen Gardiner had written as he slowly died. As Mr. J. W. Marsh—the Commander's biographer—has pointed out, it is amazing that these precious relics still remained. 'The tide ebbed and flowed, but it did no injury to those fragmentary memorials of these Christian martyrs. The spray dashed over them and left indelible stains; the rain poured down from above; the winds blew loud and strong; but a sleepless eye watched over them, an almighty hand protected them; and, in almost every case, the handwriting is still plain.'

Were ever such memorials? Every sentence vibrates with jubilant triumph. Again and again he breaks into poetry. 'Although,' he sings,

Although my daily bread has failed,  
I know from whence it came;  
And still His faithful promises  
Are every day the same;  
His words the same for evermore  
As when they first were given;  
Yea, blessed thought! they cannot fail  
Though earth dissolve and heaven!

On the day that precedes his death, he assures us that, though four days without food, he has no sensation of hunger. And here are the last sentences he ever penned:

*Yet a little while, and through grace we shall join that blessed throng to sing the praises of Christ throughout eternity. I neither hunger nor thirst though five days without food! Marvellous kindness to me—a sinner!*

*A new heart! A new heart!* Was ever heart so joyful, so blithe, so invincibly gay? Was ever heart so unconquerable, so unrepining, so patient?

## VII

In all his last writings, he begs, with pathetic reiteration, that the work may be vigilantly prosecuted until Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego have been completely won for Christ. His wish was respected. Years afterwards Charles Darwin—most dispassionate of witnesses—declared that the transfor-



mation effected in Tierra del Fuego was the brightest trophy that Christianity had won, and he liberally supported the continuance of the work. The letter that an old lady wrote to a young lieutenant at Penang led, not only to the salvation of his own soul, but to the illumination of half a continent.

## II

### AUGUSTUS TOPLADY'S TEXT

#### I

ENGLISH soil is haunted. Go where you will, the most glorious ghosts glide out from the silences and startle you. In visiting the Homeland recently, I vaguely expected to confront these splendid spectres in the cities: but I was scarcely prepared to find them moving in broad daylight among the ploughed fields, the fragrant hedgerows and the drowsy hamlets of the countryside. Yet there they were! I met them on the Essex wolds; on the Norfolk broads; on the Salisbury plains; on the Sussex downs; on the Devonshire moors; and on the village greens of Kent. I met them among the picturesque peaks and the idyllic waters of Cumberland and Westmorland; among the Surrey hills; among the Yorkshire fells, and among the lochs and trossachs of Scotland. I came upon them everywhere. One such experience holds my memory in thrall to-day.

It was a beautiful morning in August; we were staying at a little town in Devonshire; and, after breakfast, our host made a suggestion which was altogether to our taste.

‘It’s a shame to stay indoors,’ he observed; ‘how would you like to see some of our Devonshire lanes and perhaps look round a village or two?’

And so it came about that, an hour later, we were making our way up hill and down dale through scenery of the most bewitching loveliness. The lanes are so narrow that we speculate as to what will happen if we chance to meet another car; and so tortuous that we spend half our time tooting for the admonition of drivers who never appear. At times the little car seems buried in mountains of hedgerow. Then, as we emerge from the dense seclusion of a noble avenue of beeches, or reach the summit of some gentle knoll, we pause to survey the panorama of field and farm, woodland and stream, spread out before us, and inquire the names of the sequestered villages nestling in the hollows. The red kine, standing amidst the rich grass that rises to their dewlaps, stare lazily round at us as we drink in the beauty of the landscape.

All at once, at a lonely spot where two roads meet, we come upon a wayside memorial. We alight to read the inscription. To our astonishment we discover that this tall column—rising from the grass of the roadside—is a monument to John Coleridge Patteson, the martyr-Bishop of the South Seas! And why should the memorial to so heroic a soul, with whose text I have dealt in a later chapter of this book, stand in this charming but outlandish spot? The question is soon answered. For, in his

early days, Patteson lived here! In this delightful district some of the happiest hours of his childhood were spent. Before we returned from that memorable drive, we inspected the home of his boyhood; and, a day or two later, we motored along this self-same road as far as Exeter Cathedral—in which he was ordained—and admired the handsome Martyr's Pulpit which has been placed there to his illustrious memory. But we have wandered from the wayside column at which we alighted. Reentering the car, we slip along the lane to Ottery St. Mary, the home of Coleridge, and glance at Hayes Farm, the birthplace of Sir Walter Raleigh.

*John Coleridge Patteson!*

*Samuel Taylor Coleridge!*

*Sir Walter Raleigh!*

What glorious ghosts are we meeting in the course of this casual drive of ours! Yet it was of none of these that I set out to write. For, in the course of that morning spin, we came upon the pretty little village of Broadhembury. A photograph of the dreamy old hamlet lies before me at this moment. If, on the face of God's earth, there is anywhere a more peaceful and picturesque place than Broadhembury, I should dearly love to be taken to it. A single street of little thatched cottages; none of the walls quite upright; none of the thatched roofs quite regular; none of the eaves quite level. Each cottage has its porch; each porch juts out on to the roadway (for Broadhembury would regard foot-

paths or pavements as a newfangled and senseless affectation); and each porch and cottage-wall is splashed with irregular and straggling patches of ivy, rambler roses, and sweet briar. I almost apologized to Broadhembury for bursting upon its tranquillity in a motor-car. A motor-car in Broadhembury is an anachronism, almost a sacrilege. It is the clashing of two separate ages: it is the invasion of the world of repose by the world of hustle and noise. At the end of this cluster of old-fashioned habitations stands the village church, its noble tower rising grandly above its ancestral yews. And it was when we entered the church that we discovered that, like all the other villages, Broadhembury is haunted. The radiant spirit that we there encountered shed a new glory on the village we had just explored.

## II

For, on the church wall, we found a tablet. How little we dreamed, when we set out on our morning drive, to find this stately phantom along one of these Devonshire lanes! Yet here it is! And here it is, too, in the actual setting with which, in other days, it was familiar—and this is the inscription that we read:



IN GRATEFUL MEMORY OF  
AUGUSTUS MONTAGU TOPLADY, B.A.,  
VICAR OF THIS PARISH FROM 1768 TO 1778, AND AUTHOR  
OF THE IMMORTAL HYMN:

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee;  
Let the water and the blood,  
From Thy riven side which flowed,  
Be of sin the double cure—  
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.

TO WHOSE PERSONAL PIETY, BRILLIANT GIFTS, SANCTIFIED  
LEARNING AND UNCOMPROMISING ADVOCACY OF THE  
GOSPEL OF THE SOVEREIGN GRACE OF GOD, HIS WRITINGS  
BEAR ABUNDANT TESTIMONY

THIS TABLET

IS ERECTED A.D. 1898, BEING 120 YEARS AFTER HE ENTERED  
INTO THE JOY OF HIS LORD ON THE 11TH AUGUST, 1778, IN  
THE THIRTY-EIGHTH YEAR OF HIS AGE.

*For by grace are ye saved through faith: not of works,  
lest any man should boast.*

In the course of a century and a half, the rest of the world may have changed; but Broadhembury has made no effort to keep pace with those feverish fluctuations. 'If,' says Mr. Thomas Wright, Toplady's biographer, 'if Toplady could revisit the village, he would recognize the cottages with their white cob walls and mouse-coloured thatch roofs; the churchyard wall—also of cob and also mouse-coloured; and the immemorial 'yew that casts its shadows over mounds and tombstones.'

Leaving the church—a little regretfully—we saunter once more through the village, trying to conjure up the figure of Augustus Toplady visiting from door to door—always with the priceless words of life everlasting upon his earnest lips; and then, re-entering the car, we set out over the hills for home. The outline of that exquisite slice of countryside is easily remembered. For, as Mr. Wright says again, ‘whatever pictures fade from the mind of the visitor to Broadhembury, he will not lose the recollection of that great rounded height—Blackbutt Hill, a bastion of Blackdown—which, in Toplady’s mind, blazed with the yellow of the gorse and the amethyst of the heather, and on which, even to-day, although parts of the upland have been planted, wild Nature gorgeously asserts herself.’ Amidst such natural and historic enchantments we returned from an outing that had taught us that even the sticks and stones along the hedgerows of England are saturated with the most golden and the most sacred romance.

### III

Memory strings her pearls upon a chain. One pleasing recollection swiftly summons another to the mind. The story of our drive in Devonshire reminds me of another drive—in Surrey this time. For, in the course of that tour over the Surrey hills, we visited Farnham; and it was at Farnham that Augustus Toplady was born. Farnham commem-

orates that interesting circumstance by singing a verse of *Rock of Ages* at the Parish Church every Sunday evening. Six months before Augustus Toplady came into the world, his father left it; and the boy was therefore reared entirely by his mother. Gentle, unselfish, and devout, the good woman made the training of her boy the supreme business of her life; and he—frail, thoughtful, and plastic—responded to every uplifting influence that she brought to bear upon him. Yet, during his quiet and uneventful boyhood his faith consisted in a placid assent to the truths that his mother taught him rather than in any profound and attached convictions of his own.

Then comes a sudden change! At the age of sixteen he goes with his mother to visit her estate at Codymain, Wexford, Ireland. Near to the place at which they are staying, a man named James Morris is preaching in a barn. Augustus Toplady is captivated by the novelty of so irregular a proceeding; and, prompted mainly by curiosity, resolves to give the missionary a hearing. He goes. That night, the record says, the preacher seemed inspired. He took for his text the words: *Ye who sometimes were far off were made nigh by the blood of Christ*. Toplady—young and impressionable—was transported, carried beyond himself. ‘Under that sermon,’ he himself tells us, ‘under that sermon I was, I trust, *brought nigh by the blood of Christ*. Strange that I, who had so long sat under the means of grace in

England, should be *brought nigh by the blood of Christ* in an obscure part of Ireland, amidst a handful of God's people met together in a barn, and under the ministry of one who could hardly spell his own name. I shall remember that day to all eternity.' This was in August, 1756.

I like to shut my eyes and recall those two drives—the visit to Farnham in Surrey and the visit to Broadhembury in Devonshire. For here, at Farnham, I seem to see the fountainhead of that ever-broadening stream which, at the close of his ministry at Broadhembury poured itself into the infinite sea. It was in his Farnham days that Augustus Toplady strode out upon that spiritual pilgrimage which, lasting only two and twenty years, made him one of the most potent and effective forces in the evangelization of England.

But, midway between his Surrey days and his Devonshire days, an experience befell him that the world will remember long after his connexion with Farnham and Broadhembury is forgotten. And that reminds me of another drive.

#### IV

We were at Wells in Somerset; and, after visiting the Cathedral, we set out for Cheddar, motor-ing some distance up the George. Now it was in this charming and romantic Mendip country—at Burrington Combe—that the greatest of all our hymns was born in the soul of Augustus Toplady.

Was there ever such a storm? How the lightning rent the skies! How the thunder rolled and reverberated along those wild and rocky combes, defiles, and gorges! The whole valley is a place of solemn grandeur. The hills tower to a considerable height on either side, and out from their grassy yet precipitous slopes there project vast masses of jagged rock. In this weird place, Augustus Toplady—then curate-in-charge at Blagdon—was caught that stormy afternoon. As the black clouds gathered in preparation for the impending deluge, he cast his eyes anxiously about him and noticed a pair of huge limestone crags that, leaning against each other, seemed to have become one. In the cavity between them, Toplady took refuge; and, sheltering there, watched the violence of the elements.

His thoughts wandered back to that unforgettable experience in Ireland—the cavernous barn—the uncouth preacher—and the text! *Ye who sometimes were far off were made nigh by the blood of Christ.*

*Far off!* It seemed to him that, in those days, *he* was far off, a long way from home, lost in the storm!

*Made nigh!* It seemed to him that, as a result of that memorable transformation, *he* had been drawn near, gathered in, and given shelter from the wrath that threatened.

*Made nigh by the blood of Christ!* The rock in which he had found refuge was a cleft rock! It was only in the breaking of that holy Body, and



the shedding of that sacred Blood, that he had found shelter and satisfaction.

The thought captivated him: he could not shake it off. All the way home he thought of the rock—the rock in which he had sheltered in Burrington Combe—the Rock in which his soul had found refuge ten years earlier. And, sitting down, he wrote:

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee!  
Let the water and the blood  
From Thy wounded side which flowed,  
Be of sin the double cure;  
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.

Mr. Gladstone thought it the greatest hymn ever written in any language, and he translated it into Latin, Greek, and Italian. No other hymn has taken so firm a hold of the hearts of men. In the sweep of its melody, thousands of storm-tossed hearts have found refuge in the Rock of Ages.

## V

Professor George Jackson wishes that poor old Dr. Samuel Johnson could have sat at the feet of Augustus Toplady. The Professor is dealing with a stupendous problem. 'Was John Ruskin wrong,' he asks, 'when he said that "the root of almost every schism and heresy from which the Christian Church has ever suffered has been the effort of man to *earn* rather than *receive* his salvation?"' Once you take that view,' Professor Jackson continues, 'you are back again in the old, dreary mill-horse

round against which Luther's Reformation and Wesley's Revival were the protest, the protest of souls that knew themselves defrauded of their inheritance in Christ.' By way of illustration, the Professor cites Dr. Johnson. He has been reading Johnson's *Prayers and Meditations*. 'It is,' he says, 'a strangely moving little book. Can anyone read it and not be touched to the quick by the great, sad sincerity of soul which breathes through its every page, and at the same time without a sigh of regret that there was not some one at hand who could have shown to Johnson a more excellent way? If only Toplady could have taught him to sing

Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to Thy cross I cling,

what a difference it might have made! Religion would have been a bridge instead of a burden, something to carry him instead of something for him to carry.' This, as the tablet at Broadhembury testifies, was Toplady's gospel; and, by means of his hymn, he still preaches that gospel to the hearts of millions.

## VI

Toplady was only thirty-seven when he died. He called for his Bible and himself selected the verses that were to be read to him. *I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other crea-*

*ture, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* He was still sheltering in the rock—the Rock of Ages—and even in that last fierce storm—the storm in the Vale that is lonelier than Burrington Combe—his soul's sure refuge did not fail him.

### III

## THOMAS CARLYLE'S TEXT

#### I

THE interest that we feel in Carlyle is the interest that we feel in Vesuvius. Other great men are like great mountains; they leap from the common plane and stand out with grandeur and ruggedness against the horizon; but Carlyle is essentially volcanic. His personality is awe-inspiring; his temperament is fiery; his utterance is like a turgid flow of lava. He holds for us the fascination that attaches to all things that are terrible, weird, explosive. He takes knowing. The reader who picks up *Sartor Resartus* or *The French Revolution* for the first time feels that he is crossing a ploughed field in silk slippers. The going is hard and the gait ungraceful; but there is novelty in it; and, after a while, he gets accustomed to the rough track and begins to enjoy the smell of the upturned soil and the tang of the bracing air. The geologists have taught us that the world is all the better and the safer for having a few volcanoes; and it is certainly the better for having men of the type of Thomas Carlyle.

Carlyle stands, and stands conspicuously, among the prophets of the ages. He was, as Edmond Scherer, the French scholar, declares, the *Prophet of Sincerity*. Truth was his passion. He was tre-

mendously in earnest. 'Carlyle is no homœopathist,' said Mazzini, the Italian patriot; 'he never administers remedies for evil in infinitesimal doses; he never pollutes the sacredness of thought by outward concession or compromise with error. Like Luther, he hurls his inkstand at the devil without looking to the consequences; but he does it with such sincerity that the devil himself could not be displeased at it were the moment not critical and every blow of the inkstand a serious thing to him.' There, then, stands your nineteenth-century prophet, not greatly dissimilar from the prophets of an earlier age—Elijah, Jeremiah, John the Baptist! 'No prophet,' says Mr. Maclean Watt, 'ever gripped and shook his generation with such a horny hand and such a grasp invincible.' Mr. Watt contrasts Carlyle with Ruskin. 'Ruskin approaches all his themes as if in broadcloth and with his gloves on; but the rugged Scotsman walks out with his budget of kingly truths, and, no matter what clothing he wears, you feel the homespun and naked grip of a strong man's influence.'

When Carlyle was an old man of eighty, Lord Beaconsfield, in the Queen's name, offered him a peerage and an income capable of maintaining its rank and dignity. Such a distinction had never before been offered to any man of letters, and Carlyle was not unmindful of the honour done him. But he shook his shaggy old head. A prophet with a peerage and a lordly pension!



'Very proper of the Queen to offer it,' observed a London bus-conductor to James Anthony Froude next day, 'and more proper of he to say that he would have nothing to do with it. 'Tain't the likes of they who can do honour to the likes of he!'

Froude agreed with the conductor. 'Yet,' he adds, 'the country was saved by that offer from the reproach of coming centuries, when Carlyle will stand among his contemporaries as Socrates stands among the Athenians, the one pre-eminently wise man to whom all the rest are nothing.' Lord Morley goes a step further. 'He is,' that eminent authority declares, 'not only one of the foremost literary figures of his own time, which is a comparatively small thing, but one of the greatest moral forces of all time.'

*The Prophet of Sincerity!* says Scherer.

*The most powerful teacher of righteousness and truth that his generation knew,* says Mr. Maclean Watt.

*The one pre-eminently wise man of his time,* says Froude.

*One of the greatest moral forces of all time,* says Lord Morley.

How, I wonder, and when, and where was that stupendous power generated? By what agency and instrumentality was our Prophet of Sincerity called to his prophetic office? The matter is worth investigating.

## II

When he died, a grave in Westminster Abbey was offered, and, like the peerage and the pension, declined. He had begged that he might be buried beside his father and mother in the old churchyard at Ecclefechan by the Solway. Those who know the story of his life know why. Beneath that stern and rugged surface, there was a deep, rich vein of human tenderness. All through the years it found expression in his letters to his father and mother. He felt that he owed everything to them. Was he the prophet of honesty, sincerity, truth? It was his father who made him so. His father was a stonemason. He built the house in which his famous son was born, and many of the other dwellings along that Scottish countryside.

‘Nothing that he undertook to do but he did it faithfully and like a true man,’ says the sage. ‘I still look on the houses that he built with a certain proud interest. They stand firm and sound to the heart all over his little district. No one that comes after him will ever be able to sneer at them as the handiwork of a hollow eye-servant.’

At the height of his fame, Carlyle loved to recall the simple but stately phrases that he had heard his father use at evening worship in the old Dumfriesshire cottage. The majestic music of those prayers haunted his ear to his dying day. The honest stonemason had very little money and very many children,

but it was his dream that Thomas should go to the university and be a minister. So, very early, one cold November morning, Thomas set out on his long eighty-mile trudge to Edinburgh. His father and mother walked a mile or two with him. To the end of his days there was always a moistening of the eyes when he spoke of two things. The *first* was his father's eagerness to work early and late, to pinch and stint and save, in order that Thomas might enjoy advantages to which his father had never aspired. 'With a noble faith,' says Thomas, 'he launched me forth into a world which himself had never been permitted to visit.' The *second* was the dumb, unexpressed but bitter disappointment of the father when the son told him that he had resolved, after all, *not* to become a minister. 'Carlyle never forgot his father's respectful acceptance of his decision, and he knew, too, that the disappointment was an abiding sorrow to his mother.'

His mother! The most beautiful things that Carlyle ever wrote, were the letters that he addressed to that mother of his. 'I have shifted my writing-table,' he says, in one of them, 'and now, every time I look up, your affectionate, sorrowing face looks down on me from the picture-frame above the mantelpiece. It has a sorrow in it, that face, which goes to my very heart. But it is not to be called a mere sorrow either; it is a noble weariness rather, as of much work done. I will wish all men and all women such a sorrow.'

‘Good Mother!’ he says, in writing to his brother; ‘she is quite cheery yet; looks back with still resignation on many a sorrow and forward with humble pious trust. It is beautiful to see how, in the gradual decay of all other strength, the strength of her heart and affection still survives fresher than ever. The soul refuses to grow old with the body—one of the most affecting sights.’

It was from his mother’s lips that he learned his text. It was first of all *her* text. I seem to see the barefooted, tousle-headed Scottish laddie sitting on the little stool before the crackling fire in that modest little cottage in the Vale of Arran whilst the good woman spells the great words out to him: *We know that all things work together for good to them that love God*. She tells him how, not once nor twice, but over and over again, she has tested them and found them true. That golden word became the one serene confidence of his stormy heart; and, in his works and correspondence, it occurs repeatedly. The early years of his literary life were all spent among the mosshags of Craigenputtock. Oh, those weary years at Craigenputtock! The house on the moorland—which Froude describes as the dreariest spot in the British dominions—became to him a place of ‘lying draggletails of byre-woman; peat-moss and isolation; exasperation and confusion.’ He wrote on and on, but to no apparent purpose, only one voice—a woman’s—constantly encouraging him. ‘It is twenty-three months,’ he complains,

'since I earned a penny by the craft of literature. Providence warns me to have done with it. I have failed in the Divine Eternal Universe.' Yet, all the while, he was writing what he knew the world needed to read. The prophet soul blazed within him. *Sartor Resartus* had gone off like a damp squib, and been ridiculed as clotted nonsense. *The French Revolution* was ready for the printer. 'What they will do with this book, no one knows, my Jeanie lass, but they have not had for two hundred years any book that came more truly from a man's very heart, so let them trample it under foot and hoof as they see best!' Then he made his big plunge—'one of the biggest plunges that a man can take.' He felt the lure of London and resolved to fling himself into its tumult. In that hour of crises he threw all his weight on his mother's text, the text that he had made his own. *We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.* He quotes the text—his mother's text and his—in a letter to his brother. And when he heard that his mother was in deep distress because one of her boys, Mick, had emigrated and settled across the Atlantic, he sent her her own text to comfort her. He tried to pour back into her heavy heart the solace which she had, first of all, communicated to his. 'You have had much to suffer, dear mother,' he writes, 'and are grown old in the Valley of Tears; but you always say, as all of us should say, "Have we not many mercies, too?"' Is there not above all, and in



all, a Father watching over us, through whom all sorrows shall yet *work together for good*? Yes, it is even so. Let us try to hold by *that* as an anchor most sure and steadfast!

When Carlyle's father died, the daughter wrote letters in which the other members of the family were acquainted with their loss. But the mother insisted on adding a postscript. 'It is God that has done it; be still, my dear children!' *There* was the fountainhead of Carlyle's faith—a faith that he propagated in every page that he penned. 'Man issues from Eternity,' he writes, 'is encompassed by Eternity, and again in Eternity disappears. It is fearful and wonderful. This only we know, that God is above it, that God made it, and that God rules it for good.'

*For we know that all things work together for good to them that love God.*

It was Bernard Gilpin's text. Bernard Gilpin was sentenced, under Queen Mary, to die for his faith. During his imprisonment he repeated the text morning, noon and night. *We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.* On his way to execution he fell and broke his leg. He was ordered back to prison, and, whilst he moaned in pain, the gaoler twitted him with his text. 'Ah,' the good man replied, 'but it's true all the same! It's all *working together for good*!' And it was, for whilst he lay there, Mary died, Elizabeth ascended the throne, and Bernard Gilpin was set at liberty.

III

*We know!*

Carlyle found rare music in those two syllables. By a skilful operation, Lord Lister once saved the life of W. E. Henley. In expressing his gratitude to the great surgeon, Henley says that 'his wise, rare smile is sweet with certainties.' 'I heard,' says another poet,

I heard a bird at break of day,  
Sing from the autumn trees  
A song so mystical and calm,  
'Twas full of certainties!

Lister's smile was *sweet with certainties*; the bird's song was *full of certainties*; so was the soul of Thomas Carlyle. *We know*, he said, *we know!* Thomas Carlyle was very sure of God. He was never in his life more hurt than when Sir James Stephen charged him with unbelief. It was in 1853. 'You must have the goodness to expunge the phrase,' he retorted. 'I have merely said that no man ought to affirm what he does not himself completely believe. My own creed is not one of scepticism or doubt; but, for these thirty years, it has been a *certainty* with me, for which I am, and ought to be, for ever thankful to the Maker of me.'

And the source of that certainty? Carlyle thought of the old scenes by the Solway fireside. 'In the poorest cottages,' he said, 'are books—is one book, a noble book, wherein for several thousands of years, the spirit of man has found light and nourishment

and an interpreting response to whatever is deepest in him; wherein still, to this day, for the eye that will look well, the Mystery of Existence reflects itself, if not to the satisfying of the outward sense, yet to the opening of the inward sense, which is the far grander result.'

*We know!*—'my creed is a certainty with me.'

*We know that all things work together for good to them that love God.*

#### IV

If ever a man's text was put to the test, Carlyle's was. He devoted his life to the study of history. He saw *all things working*. But he saw a harmony in their working: he was convinced that all things were *working together*. And he saw an aim, a purpose, a goal in their working: history was not the chance product of blind forces. *All things were working together for good!* His mother said so; his Bible said so; and his lifelong experience, fortified by industrious researches, proved to his complete satisfaction that the shining words were true. He clung to that buoyant conviction as long as he lived, and, in some way or other, affirmed it in every volume that he wrote. Many of his contemporaries marvelled at his confidence; but, even if they did not share it, they respected it. And those who knew him intimately, and were honoured by his conversation or correspondence, were impressed by his faith in his text at every turn. In his letters to Emerson he refers repeatedly to the all-enfolding,

all-controlling goodness of God. In one of them, written when Emerson was crushed with sorrow, Carlyle tells him that 'there are blessings which, like sunbeams in wild weather, make this rough life beautiful with rainbows, showing that there is a Sun, and a General Heart of Goodness, behind all that happens, for which let us be thankful evermore!' 'We know that God is good,' he says again, and he tells Emerson of his mother's faith. '“They cannot take God's providence from thee,” she used to say, “thou hast never wanted yet”.'

On his forty-ninth birthday I find him writing one of his lovely letters to that wonderful mother of his. 'This time nine and forty years ago,' he says, 'I was a small infant a few hours old, lying, unconscious, in your kind bosom, you piously rejoicing over me—appointed to love me while life lasted to us both. Surely, we may both say, as the old Hebrews devotedly did, *Hitherto hath the Lord helped us!* Yes, for all our sorrows and difficulties, we have not been without help, neither shall we be.'

And, in one of his last letters, he tells his friend, Erskine of Linlathen, of the comfort he finds, on sleepless nights, in meditating on the Fatherly love of God.

Before me, as I write, there stands a picture by Mr. John R. Skelton, of which I am very fond. It represents Carlyle and Tennyson sitting together on the lawn at Chelsea. On most things they were pretty much of one mind. 'If,' says Tennyson,

## A Faggot of Torches

'If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,  
I heard a voice "believe no more"  
And heard an ever-breaking shore  
That tumbled in the Godless deep;  
A warmth within the breast would melt  
The freezing reason's colder part,  
And like a man in wrath the heart  
Stood up and answer'd "*I have felt.*"'

That was Carlyle's faith exactly. He *had felt*. 'What can books and arguments matter to you or me?' cried Catherine Elsmere to Robert, when his faith was failing him, 'have we not *known* and *felt* Him as He is?—have we not, Robert? Come!'

There is no argument like the argument of experience. 'I have felt,' says Tennyson. 'We have *known* and *felt*,' cries Catherine Elsmere. In the old home by the Solway, Carlyle's mother led her son into a profound experience of the changeless love of Christ and the eternal goodness of God. It became, as he said, *a certainty* to him—the one sweetening influence in a singularly stormy career. For, through cloud and through sunshine, he knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that *all things work together for good to them that love God*; and his troubled heart rested serenely there.



## IV

### ROBERT FULLER'S TEXT

#### I

'Then does this mean that you've been converted again?' asked poor Clem, in uttermost dismay.

That was the trouble with Robert Fuller: he was converted so often! In her *Green Apple Harvest*, Sheila Kaye-Smith tells in vivid detail the stirring story of his three conversions. His *first* conversion was like apple-blossom, filmy and light; it soon came fluttering to the ground. His *second* conversion was like green apples, sour and hard; it set everybody's teeth on edge. His *third* conversion was like ripe fruit, rosy and sweet; the reader closes the book with the taste of it still in his mouth. But Clem did not know how good that third conversion was when, in pardonable alarm, he asked his anxious question.

Robert and Clem were the sons of James Fuller, a Sussex farmer. Their father was very religious—in his way. It was an ugly way: his wife and children were often terrified by it. Our first glimpse of him is characteristic. There is to be a revival service at the chapel: James is determined that his boys

shall attend it. But, to his chagrin and vexation, they have not yet come home to tea. He suspects that they are deliberately delaying their return in order that they may evade the service. He declares that they shall go, even if they go without their tea. His fury is intensified by the secret conviction that this course would only be possible in the case of Clem. Clem is gentle and yielding, and a tremendous admirer of his big and burly brother. But Robert is massive and handsome and reckless. 'Robert is grown up, twenty-two at Michaelmas, and for five years at least his father has been incapable of making him do anything he did not like. Clem he can still force a bit, for Clem is only seventeen and vulnerable. But he does not care so much about Clem, whose docility has never challenged his own weakness. It is that big, heavy, bounding Robert—all health and sin—whom James Fuller would like to subdue. Sometimes in dreams he takes it out of Robert.' But only in dreams.

## II

The boys arrived in time, after all. Robert had been drinking at the village inn. Clem had been sweethearting with Polly. Robert reached home first. The outer door crashed open; someone shouted at the cat; and then the kitchen door burst in with similar violence. 'He looked older than his years. His face was florid and there was a little dark moustache on his upper lip, shading without hiding the

full curves of his mouth. His eyes were blue, and also rather full; his hair was dark and carefully oiled. He was dressed after the manner of the exquisites of the district—in a fawn coat and checked riding breeches, with leather gaiters and boots.' He had imbibed at the bar just enough liquor to make him lively. He sang hymns over his tea. His father stormed at him and accused him of blasphemy; but Robert protested that he was singing the hymns from his heart. As, in all probability, he was. Robert was a child of impulse.

'Turn, sinners, turn to Me!' cried the preacher. Clem was wishing himself out in the lane with Polly, and, wishing it, fell asleep. Robert, on the contrary, leaned forward in his seat, drinking in every word. He sat with his eyes fixed on the preacher's face, his jaw dropping towards his flashing tie, a few beads of sweat on his forehead.

'Now, brothers and sisters,' said the missionary, 'before I sit down there is something I should like to ask of you. Will those who have felt the grace of God in their souls stand up and be witnesses to the congregation?'

Clem, wide awake by this time and feeling miserably ashamed of himself for having slumbered, noticed one or two people slowly rise. Then, glancing round, he was utterly dumbfounded at seeing Robert on his feet! 'There he stood—a great hulking, strapping creature—the most conspicuous object in the room, in his fancy waistcoat and check breeches!

His face was crimson and he looked half dazed. Clem felt a thrill go down his backbone. Robert was saved! Robert was a believer—he who had been brought home drunk only a week ago! Clem could scarcely believe his eyes. Robert, who loved to play crown and anchor at the public-house and to swagger through the village on market nights with a girl on his arm, standing there to show that he was converted! Oh, how Clem wished that he had listened to the sermon and heard what it was that had so powerfully moved Robert's heart! He felt proud of Robert standing there among the elect.

Clem was quite alone, however, in his admiration. Others were suspicious or critical or angry. On his return from the chapel, the family received Robert frigidly, and his father called him a fool. 'You're that,' he said, 'if you're not worse!'

Such treatment set up a violent reaction in Robert's impulsive breast. He felt that he had been victimized; and he felt, strangely enough, that God was to blame for it.

'I tell you, Clem,' he said, as they sat on their beds discussing the incident that night. 'I tell you that it was God that spoke to me. He's played me a trick. He's angry with me because I like enjoying myself and loving girls and drinking at pubs and doing things as He don't hold with; so He's done this to pay me out. But I'll show Him as I ain't beat as easy as that. If anyone hereabouts thinks that I'm saved, he'll soon know different. I'll go

to the gipsies and I'll have that girl Hannah Iden. I don't care what I do!

To fraternize with the gipsies was, in the judgement of those Sussex villagers, to sound the lowest depths of social degradation. A man who mixed with gipsies was a pariah, a leper, an outcast. Clem tried to reason his big brother into a better mood, but it was useless. A few nights later, when he took Polly down to the merry-go-round that was visiting the village, they saw Robert there with Hannah the gipsy-girl clinging to his arm. That night, after Clem had seen Polly home, he had to help Robert to bed. For Robert came home drunk.

That is the story of Robert Fuller's *first* conversion—his apple-blossom conversion. It looked beautiful and full of promise for a little while; but it was a light and airy conversion, a thing of sudden impulse; and, like the petals on the fruit-tree, it was swept away by the first rough wind that blew.

### III

Robert Fuller's *second* conversion—his green apple conversion—began on Clem's wedding-day. When the happy young bridegroom went to his room to dress for the ceremony, he found his elder brother already dressed but sitting beside his bed shuddering with terror. He held an open Bible in his hand.

'Whatever's happened?' asked Clem.

'Something terrible!' replied the agonized Robert.



And he told the sympathetic Clem his story. He had dreamed that he had seen a great Bible with flames rushing out from its covers to destroy him. He blanched at every remembrance of it. The dream had led him to consult his Bible. He opened it several times at random, and, each time, some dreadful text sprang out at him. *'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God'; 'They shall call upon Me but I will not answer';* and so on. Clem tried to pacify him by opening the Bible at random himself. The texts that came to light were, in his case, quite meaningless: *'Three bowls like unto almonds,'* and so on. The experiment only confirmed Robert's apprehensions. The awful passages that had alarmed him were clearly addressed directly to himself. They would not come when Clem handled the Bible.

From that hour—the hour of Clem's felicity—Robert felt himself to be a lost soul. The flames that he had seen darting out of the covers of the Bible—the flames of judgement—the flames of hell—haunted his fancy sleeping and waking. Since he was lost—irretrievably and eternally lost—he abandoned himself to his sinister courses with the recklessness of despair. Hannah, the gipsy, became his evil genius. He and she were inseparable. With all the strength of his great burly manhood, he came to love her; and, loving her, had not the eyes to see that she was only making sport of him. It pleased her to show the villagers the power that a gipsy

could exercise over one of the finest young farmers in the district; and it pleased the gipsies to get him, through the agency of Hannah, within their grasp. One of the most staggering blows that ever fell upon Robert was the sudden discovery that, without a whisper to him, Hannah had married one of her own people. He hated and cursed her for having deceived, betrayed, and humiliated him; and yet, in spite of himself, he loved her still.

The experience only intensified the darkness through which he was groping his way, a darkness that was fitfully illumined by those dreadful flames, the flames that broke from his Bible. Partly to alleviate his misery and partly to show Hannah how little he cared, he suddenly married Mabel Powlard. Mabel was a shallow, showy creature. She had persistently courted him; but she never understood him, never deserved him, never loved him and never won his love. He proposed to her in one of his sudden gusts of impulse. As he stood upon her doorstep on that fateful day, a Voice seemed to say to him: 'Don't go in there for comfort, Robert; *come unto Me!*' But he stifled the Voice and married Mabel.

Mabel's tepidness made him sigh for Hannah's warmth: Mabel's querulousness sent him back to his boon companions. He again took to drink; and one night, after a drunken orgy, he was found with a broken head upon the road—the road that led to Hannah!

## IV

When he recovered consciousness he was lying in a neat but strange little bedroom reading again and again a text upon the wall:

*I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee.*

'The words were written in black letters on a clean sheet of paper. They seemed to be nailed to his forehead. They were written in darkness on light. They were written in light on darkness. They burnt him up: he was a little cinder and he smouldered in them. Oh, how it hurt! I am tormented in this flame! It is the love of God. I am a little cinder burning in it. Oh, how it hurts! how it hurts!'

He was in the house of the old minister who had found him on the highroad, a minister of a hard and narrow faith. There was a Bible in the room, and Robert asked for it. It opened at a picture—a picture of hell! He read: 'Without are dogs . . .' and so on. It was all hell, hell, hell! He could find no comfort anywhere: the old minister could afford him none. '*He will have mercy,*' said the old man, '*on whom He will have mercy and whom He will He hardeneth.*'

'Oh Kiddie,' he moaned to Mabel, when, one afternoon, she deigned to visit him, 'I'll never touch another drop as long as I live, although that will make no difference, for the old minister says I'm for the

wrath to come. Whatever shall I do? What *shall* I do?

The only ray of comfort was the text on the wall: *I have loved thee with an everlasting love.* 'I have loved thee,' said poor Robert to himself; 'then perhaps He won't send me to hell for all I've been so bad!'

At length, after long and gloomy weeks, in which the horror of hell was ceaselessly upon him, Robert—to use his own phrase—said *Amen* to his own damnation. 'Thou art holy in all Thy works,' he cried, 'and righteous in all Thy ways: if in Thy sight it is right that I should go to hell, Thy will be done! I'll go to hell to please Thee!'

He opened his Bible and prayed for a sign that his submission was accepted. It opened at: *I have loved Thee with an everlasting love.* 'I seemed to melt for joy,' he told Clem. 'That was three times I had seen those words. So I reckon I'm safe: I'll never go in fear of hell any more. I'll give all my life to Him, and I'll never drink nor smoke nor grumble at Mabel as long as I live!'

That is the story of Robert Fuller's *second* conversion—his green apple conversion. It was an escape from hell. He had grasped at the love of God in order to obtain deliverance from everlasting perdition. Under the influence of that conversion Robert set out to warn all the people of the countryside to flee from the wrath to come. He neglected his wife and child; he forsook his home for days

together; he let the farm go to rack and ruin. He tramped from village to village, delivering at fairs, at markets and on village greens, his stern and terrible message. He came on a knot of young girls gathered at the well and he told them of the torments of that fire in which no tongue can be cooled and no thirst quenched. He looked in at the smithy, and, as the bellows roared and the flames leaped up, he told the smith of the day that shall burn as a furnace. And then he thought of Hannah! He must warn Hannah! He must save Hannah's soul! He went. The gipsies, seeing their chance, left him alone with her. She knew her part and played her game most cleverly. Even as he preached to her, she used her old enchantments. The old feelings mastered him. He sprang upon her and smothered her face with kisses. The gipsies, watching, rushed into the tent. He fought with them and fell. They offered to be silent if he would give them gold. He refused them the money for which they hungered; and they sent him straight to prison.

The whole countryside mocked and jeered: Mabel, disgusted, returned to her father's home, leaving her child with Clem and Polly, who, to their sorrow, had no baby of their own. And thus Robert's *second* conversion—the hard and sour conversion—came to nothing.

## V

After six months in Maidstone Gaol, Robert returned to Clem and Polly. But he felt that he was



in everybody's way. He was a disgrace to the family: he was a scandal to religion: and he stood in the way of a happier marriage for Mabel. He would drown himself. Writing a word of farewell on the fly-leaf of his Bible, he crept out of the house in the dawn of a perfect morning. He stole across the soft meadows to the pond down among the alders. The whole countryside was unspeakably beautiful—the fields, the hedgerows, the farms, the cherry-tree in full blossom, the sunrise and the song of birds. Then, out of the beauty of the world, there came a voice: 'I am your God: don't you know Me?' He was overpowered by a sense of the love of God. He had only thought of the love of God as an escape from hell; but here was God loving for the sake of loving! *Loved with an everlasting love!* Loved in spite of everything and loved all the time! He hurried home and told Clem.

'And does this mean that you've been converted again?' asked Clem dubiously.

'It does,' answered Robert, 'and I must go and tell men that He's a God of love and of everything lovely. I preached a hard gospel before. I said that Christ died only for the elect, and that everyone else would burn for ever in hell. I took away God's character and I must make it right again.'

In spite of all Clem's arguments, and all Polly's entreaties, he set out. But the mob would not hear him. It laid violent hands upon him and did him to death at the horsepond. But he was quite happy

about it. It was best, as he himself had felt, that he should die. And death had come to him very kindly. For he had died in trying to show men that *God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.* He died rejoicing in the certainty that he had himself been *loved with an everlasting love*; for in *that* fact lay the sublime secret of Robert Fuller's real conversion.

## V

### AUGUSTINE'S TEXT

#### I

AMIDST the vivid and glowing tints of a North African sunrise, a woman, with frightened eyes and eager feet, is hurrying towards the quay. She is tall and spare; a woman of fifty; but looking older than her years. Poor Monica! her life has been a hard one. From her husband—ill-tempered and dissolute—she has received no sympathy at all. All her hope has been built upon her boy, and for years he has been a source of ceaseless anxiety to her. She has denied herself every day the luxuries that women love in order that he may have the best of education, the best of pleasures and the best of everything. But her sacrifices seem to have been in vain. He has lived his own life—a wild and wayward one—and now, if her worst apprehensions are confirmed, he has crowned his ingratitude by leaving her.

As soon as she comes within sight of the wharves she sees, as she expected, that the ship has sailed. For days it has been lying there, waiting for a fair wind. Her fears were awakened by Augustine's interest in the vessel. He admitted that he was longing to go to Rome, and was thinking of taking passage in her. But when, with tears and entreaties,

she had endeavoured to dissuade him, he had laughed at her misgivings, and had said that he never seriously thought of going. A friend, he explained, was leaving by the ship, and he was merely interested in the vessel on his companion's account. On waking this morning after a restless night, Monica noticed that the wind had changed. With a woman's instinctive dread, she rushed to Augustine's room. He was not there! And now, as she turns the corner of the street and comes within sight of the quay, she sees that the ship is no longer in the port. In the hope that he may merely have visited the pier to speed his friend's departure, she hurries to the water-side. And there she learns to her distress that Augustine was a passenger! She covers her face to hide her misery, and turning once more towards home, begins sadly to re-ascend the hill.

## II

Faith is not easy to some people. Monica had earnestly tried to be a Christian; all her neighbours knew of her piety and devotion; yet the stars in their courses seemed to be fighting against her. Her very prayers appeared a mockery. What is it that Tennyson says?

O mother, praying God will save  
Thy sailor—while thy head is bowed  
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud  
Drops in his vast and wandering grave!

So was it with Monica. Whilst she was praying

that her boy—the light of her eyes—might be kept pure and sweet and chaste, he was going from excess to excess, and every day her gentle spirit was tortured by some fresh story of his riotous behaviour. Last night she fell asleep praying that Augustine might be prevented from sailing; this morning she wakes to find that the wind has changed, the ship has vanished, and Augustine has gone!

And yet how blind we are! How little we know! It has never occurred to Monica, during her years of disappointment and spiritual anguish, that there may be a sense in which her son's uncurbed and wayward life may be a response to her prayers. It does not occur to her this morning that perhaps Augustine's departure for Rome may be the best possible answer to the passionate petitions that she offered overnight. Yet let us see!

In his own record of those wasted years, Augustine tells us that he was hurried from one form of indulgence to another by the sheer hunger of his heart. He likens his soul to a land that has been parched by drought and desolated by famine. He was longing, as Mr. R. E. Prothero says, for satisfaction; his soul ached for peace; but how to find it he knew not. 'Ever craving for something ideal and enduring, haunted by the solitude of his own mind, he obeyed the wild impulses of youth, pursued delights that appealed to his artistic or sensuous nature, sought distractions in objects pleasing to the eye, in games, theatres or music, or in the indulgence



of animal passion. Yet, tortured by reproaches of conscience, he reaped no harvest of repose; he only gleaned self-loathing.' How little his mother suspected the insatiable heart-hunger that underlay her son's wanton ways! How little she guessed that, even then, in his blind and clumsy way, he was groping after God!

In the course of that feverish pursuit of satisfaction, Augustine made four famous ventures: (1) He tried to find delight in the voluptuous, the sensuous, the carnal; it was like eating Dead Sea apples; the momentary excitement left in his soul a trail of loathing and disgust. (2) He tried to find contentment in the purely æsthetic. He developed his taste for art, for music, for rhetoric, for science; he worshipped beauty in every phase and form; but it was like offering a dainty confectionery to a starving man. He was ravenous for something infinitely more satisfying. The shallows were babbling to the deep: the shallows mocked the deep: for the deep is ever listening for the deep's own call. (3) He tried philosophy. The Hortensius of Cicero fell into his hands and turned his thoughts in a new direction. 'This book,' he says, 'changed my disposition and gave me other purposes and desires. Every vain hope at once became contemptible to me, and I longed with an incredible ardour for the immortality of wisdom.' (4) He became religious. He read the Scriptures, though to little profit. 'They seemed to me unworthy to be compared to the state-

liness of Tully; for my swelling pride shrunk from their humility, nor could my sharp wit pierce the interior thereof.' He joined the Manicheans—an Oriental sect which sought to restore the fading glories of Zoroastrianism by investing it with some of the gentler elements in the Christian faith. 'For nine years Augustine wandered in the mazes of these abstract speculations, his intellect subdued by their subtleties, and his imagination charmed by their symbolic interpretations of nature.' But, as Mr. Prothero hastens to add, he found no abiding happiness in this 'splendid fable'; and, little by little, his faith in its authority was undermined. It was when the fourth of these experiments—his religion—failed him, that he resolved to cross the seas. He was soured. His mind was disillusioned and embittered. His idols had all fallen and the pedestals were empty. He was sceptical of everything. Yet, all the while, deep down in the dark abyss of his vacant soul, a voice was crying for the light. What voice was it that cried? And what was the light that it cried for? Augustine is forced to recognize that, after having greedily devoured all the husks that have come his way, his heart is still famished. He is learning sordidly the truth he is yet to teach sublimely: 'Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our souls are restless till they find their rest in Thee!'

And so, little as she suspects it, Monica's faith is vanquishing her lawless son. 'With my mother's milk,' he says, 'I sucked in the name of Jesus Christ.'

Little as she suspects it, Monica's prayers are hard at work in Augustine's soul; he is painfully learning that 'none, none but Christ can satisfy.' And, little as she suspects it, those overnight prayers of hers were at work on the fateful morning on which Augustine sailed for Rome. 'That night,' he says, in his *Confessions*, 'that night I stole away and she was left behind in weeping and prayer. And what, O Lord, was she with so many tears asking of Thee, but that Thou wouldst not suffer me to sail? But Thou, in the depth of Thy counsels, knowing the main point of her desire, regardedst not what she then asked, that Thou mightest accomplish the greater thing for which she was ever imploring Thee.'

It *seemed* as if, during all those years at Carthage, Monica's prayers for her son were unheard and unanswered; yet, all the time, he carried within his breast a hungry heart.

It *seemed* as if the prayers with which she sobbed herself to sleep that night were unheeded; and yet, as her son said afterwards, the *smaller* thing for which she then asked was denied her in order that the *larger* thing for which she was continually asking might be granted. In those two optical illusions we have a complete *Philosophy of Unanswered Prayers*.

### III

But here is Augustine at Rome. He is a tall young fellow of thirty, of swarthy skin, dark earnest eyes,

jet-black hair, and lean emaciated features. The historic splendors of the Eternal City fascinate him; but he does not stay long. A Professor of Rhetoric is needed at Milan, and Augustine seeks and obtains the appointment. 'Thus to Milan I came,' he says, 'to Ambrose the Bishop, known to the whole world as among the best of men.' It often happens that the biggest thing in even the biggest city is the commanding personality of some one man. As Augustine looked back on his coming to Milan the fine figure of Ambrose seemed to dominate the entire horizon. Ambrose was just the man for Augustine. His very appointment was a romance. Ten years before Augustine entered the city, the bishopric was vacant. Two candidates stoutly and fiercely contended for the exalted position. After lengthy disputation, the Governor of the Province, a brilliant young lawyer, was invited to arbitrate between them and decide the weighty question. This young lawyer was Ambrose. He entered the church and commenced quietly to reason with the excited people. The indescribable charm of his noble personality captivated everybody. Suddenly, whilst he was yet speaking, the shrill voice of a little child rang through the sacred building. 'Let Ambrose himself be our Bishop!' the little one cried. The incident was so extraordinary that it seemed to the assembled people that a voice had spoken from the skies. Both factors echoed the child's cry. The rival aspirants were forgotten, and Ambrose, in response to the

universal acclaim, left the Governor's chair to become Bishop of Milan. This is the man who is waiting to minister the bread of life to the hungry soul of the new professor.

To Ambrose, Augustine opens all his heart. Ambrose speaks soothingly, sympathetically, and encouragingly to him, and urges him, above all else, to study Paul's epistles. Augustine mentions the matter to his bosom friend, Alypius. Augustine and Alypius were boys together at Tagaste, in North Africa. Alypius has followed his friend, first to Carthage and then to Milan. 'We agreed,' said Augustine, 'to spend our lives in a most ardent search after truth and wisdom. Like me he sighed, like me he walked, an earnest searcher after true life and a most acute examiner of the most difficult questions. He loved me because I seemed to him kind and learned; and I loved him for his gentleness and modesty and virtue.' The two friends arrange to read the sacred scroll together. Monica, who is now a widow, and who has also followed her son to Milan, is overjoyed at seeing him devoting himself to these new studies. Augustine and Alypius decide to begin with the *Epistle to the Romans*. One beautiful afternoon the pair are sitting together in a delicious garden on the outskirts of Milan. Their textbook—the epistle—rests on the seat between them. Something that is read—or said—brings powerfully to Augustine's mind the bitter memory of his squandered years. A hurri-



cane of unwonted emotion sweeps over him. His heart is filled with remorse and his eyes become moist with tears. In order that Alypius may not witness his weakness, he rises from the seat and wanders off to a distant corner of the grounds. Here, under the shelter of a leafy fig-tree, he throws off the restraint which his friend's presence had imposed upon him, and lets his tears flow freely. 'So,' he says, 'while I was weeping in the most bitter contrition of my heart, lo! I heard from a neighbouring house a voice of a boy or girl—I know not which—chanting repeatedly the words: *Take up and read! Take up and read!* Instantly my countenance altered; I began to ask myself most intently whether children were wont, in any kind of game, to sing such words; nor could I ever remember to have heard the like. So, checking the torrent of my tears, I arose, interpreting the voice as a command of God to go back to Alypius, *take up* the epistle, and *read* the first words I should find. Eagerly then I returned to Alypius, seized the volume, and in silence read the section on which my eyes first fell. The words were these: *Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying; but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.* No further would I read, nor was there any need; for at once, with the end of this sentence, as though the light of eternity had been poured into my heart, all the darkness of

doubt vanished away. Then, putting my finger in the place, I closed the volume, and with a calm countenance told Alypius what had taken place.' Thereupon an incident occurs that ranks among the golden romances of the faith.

For, during Augustine's absence under the fig-tree, Alypius has had a radiant experience of his own. He has been reading the epistle alone; has, indeed, been studying the very words that his companion had just read; perhaps that is why they were the first to catch Augustine's eye. But Alypius, reading a little further, has been arrested by the words that immediately follow: *Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye*; and has hailed the expression as a divine intimation that there is a place even for him in the Kingdom of Christ.

'Then,' Augustine tells us, 'we went in to my mother: we related in turn how it all took place: she leapt for joy, and, in her triumph, blessed Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, for she perceived that God had given her more than she was wont to beg by her pitiful and most sorrowful groanings.'

'Go thy way,' a bishop had said to her in the old days, when she had consulted him in anguish about her wayward son, 'go thy way and God help thee: for it is not possible that the child of these tears should perish!'

As Monica listens, first to the story of Augustine, and then to the sequel of Alypius, she, recalling

those dark and distant days, smiles at her own faithfulness. She really fancied, during those unhappy years at Carthage, that heaven was barred and bolted against her; she really thought, that early morning as she sadly climbed the hill on her return from the quay, that God had completely forgotten her. And remembering her unbelief, tears of penitence as well as of gratitude glisten on her withered cheek.

## IV

Augustine's days are all before him. He will yet move the world. The engaging personality that proved so attractive to the youth of Carthage and Milan is yet to cast its spell over myriads of young lives who, guided by him, will be saved from the snares and pit-falls into which he stumbled. The stately rhetoric that stirred the multitudes when he discoursed on history and philosophy is to be consecrated to evangelistic ends; the charm of his voice and the persuasiveness of his eloquence are yet to awaken countless consciences and to lead thousands of trembling penitents to the Saviour of the World—his mother's Saviour and his own. By his writings he is to appeal with heart-searching potency and effectiveness to a hundred nations and to a hundred generations. 'No human mind since that of Paul,' says one of our most competent critics, 'has so widely, deeply and persuasively influenced the Church of Christ.' Yes, Augustine's days are all

before him: but Monica's frail frame is spent. She does not long survive the memorable day on which Augustine and Alypius are baptized and welcomed by Ambrose into the Church.

'My son,' she says softly, as they sit together at a window in Ostia, a short time afterwards, watching the long, long shadows which the autumn sunset is casting across the green, green lawn, 'my son, I know not to what end I linger here. I had but one desire, the desire to see thee a Christian before I died. There is no reason why I should tarry longer.'

They remain at the window, hand in hand, until the sunshine and the shadows have alike departed. In the twilight Augustine hears her crooning softly to herself the beautiful Latin paraphrase: *Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.* The air becomes chilly, and they leave the window. A week later, Augustine turns sadly but reverently and gratefully from his mother's quiet resting-place, and commences the lifework that has made him one of the most sublime and uplifting forces in the history of the world.

## VI

### JOSEPHINE BUTLER'S TEXT

#### I

ONCE upon a time, when the world was young, angels often appeared among men. They do still; but they take a different form. If the old days—the patriarchal days—could have produced a Santa Teresa or an Elizabeth Fry or a Frances Willard or a Catherine Booth or a Josephine Butler, there would have been no need for the coming of the angels. It was because the sacred tree that had been divinely planted in the midst of the nations was as yet incapable of producing such fruit, that special provision had to be made. In those days the angels came and went, but they came and went leaving little to show for their coming. Josephine Butler came, and earth can never be quite the same again. Misery fled before her, as darkness is scattered at dawn. Thousands of lives, soured and wretched, were sweetened and brightened; social life became pervaded by a new and healthier atmosphere; the laws of nations were made more just and more humane. The Right Hon. James Stuart, M. A., LL.D., declares that there is no man living, and cer-



tainly no woman, whose lot is not the happier for Josephine Butler's influence. 'The world,' he says, 'is different because she lived: she belongs to all nations and to all people: the seed that she has sown can never die.'

It is a singularly lovable and engaging figure that is conveyed by the biographies to the sensitive plate of one's fancy. We see her as a cultured and graceful girl, fond of music, fond of painting, particularly fond of dogs and passionately fond of fun. She loves to be prettily dressed; loves the open air; and loves to find herself mounted on a horse of spirit and mettle. She is a born romp. She has an exceptional gift of making herself perfectly and delightfully at home with people of all kinds and classes; the most exalted and the most degraded feel completely at their ease in her company. 'She is very beautiful,' writes one who knew her well, 'and of sweet and gracious presence; and the impression made by seeing her face and hearing her voice for the first time can never be forgotten by those who met her.'

Josephine owed much to her parents. There were two sets of stories that she loved to hear her father tell. As the friend and colleague of Clarkson, the abolitionist, he had taken a prominent part in the heroic struggle that issued in the emancipation of the slaves. She often sat at his feet whilst he related some of the most thrilling episodes in that notable crusade; and, afterwards, she often

spoke of her own attempt to uplift the world's womanhood as the natural continuation of her father's fight for freedom. Then again, the home of her girlhood was close to Flodden Field. Her father had made himself master of the story of that fateful day in 1513—

When shivered was fair Scotland's spear,  
And broken was her shield.

'Many a time,' she says, 'did my father recite to his children every incident of the battle, as he rode or walked with them over Flodden, sometimes resting at the King's Chair or sitting by Sybil's Well.' Her mother, too, had stories to tell, though of a different kind. For, Josephine says, 'one of my mother's earliest memories was of being lifted upon the knee of the venerable John Wesley, a man with white silvery hair and a benevolent countenance, who placed his two hands upon the head of the golden-haired little girl and pronounced over her a tender and solemn benediction.' The child of such parents, reared in an atmosphere so pure and so romantic, it was natural that Josephine Butler should early feel herself to be a citizen of the eternities. Her fancy took far flights: her mind insisted on exploring the riddles of the universe: she caught herself probing in solitude questions of life and death and immortality. 'It was my lot,' she says, 'from my earliest years to be haunted by the problems which more or less present themselves to every

thoughtful mind.' Year after year this haunting became more tyrannous. Her hungry heart sought help, and sought it frantically, but no help was to be found. 'My early home was far from cities,' she adds. 'I was with parents who taught by their lives what true men and women should be. Two miles away stood the parish church to which we trudged dutifully every Sunday. There an honest man in the pulpit taught us loyally all that he himself knew about God. But his words did not even touch the fringe of my soul's deep discontent.'

*The tyrannous haunting of the eager mind!*

*The hunger of a fresh young heart!*

*The soul's deep discontent!*

But there is wisdom in the craving for wisdom; there is grace in the desire for grace. In those days of dumb longing and blind groping, Josephine Butler was richer than she knew.

## II

Who would have guessed that, beneath her laughing face and her vivacious behaviour, this bright young Scottish schoolgirl carried such an aching heart? More often than we fancy there lies, beneath the gaiety that we see upon the surface, a deeper stratum of wistfulness and gravity. Josephine's secret anguish lasted for twelve long months. The words in which she has recorded the story of her travail are worthy to rank among

the classics of the soul. Not Augustine in his *Confessions*, nor Bunyan in his *Grace Abounding*, nor Brainerd in his *Journal*, nor Newton, nor Woolman, nor Fox has displayed a more profound spiritual genius.

‘For one long year of darkness,’ she says, ‘the trouble of heart and brain urged me to lay all this at the door of the God whose Name I had learned was Love. I dreaded Him, I fled from Him, until grace was given me to arise and wrestle, as Jacob did, with the mysterious Presence, who must either slay or pronounce deliverance. And then the great questioning went up from earth to heaven, “God! Who art Thou? Where art Thou? Why is it thus with the creatures of Thy hand?” I fought the battle alone, in deep recesses of the beautiful woods and pine forests around our home, or on some lonely hillside, among wild thyme and heather, a silent temple where the only sounds were the plaintive cry of the curlew or the hum of the summer bee or the distant bleating of sheep. For hours and days and weeks in these retreats I sought the answer to my soul’s trouble and the solutions of its dark questionings. Looking back, it seems to me that the end must have been defeat and death had not the Saviour imparted to the child-wrestler something of the virtue of His own midnight agony, when in Gethsemane His sweat fell like great drops of blood to the ground.’

It was, as she says elsewhere, a case of deep call-

ing unto deep. She felt, she tells us, like one who is leaning over a great gulf, whence none who fall into it ever return. And then—"the pride and rebellion of my heart gave way before deep and heavy sorrow; and all the sorrow gathered itself up into one great cry. *In my distress I cried unto the Lord and He heard me.*" And this is the record of her deliverance:

"Looking my liberator in the face, I took my place—oh, with what infinite contentment!—by the side of her, the "woman in the city which was a sinner," of whom He, her Liberator and mine, said, "this woman hath not ceased to kiss my feet." "

The annals of spiritual experience contain nothing more touching than the spectacle of this pure-souled, high-spirited Scottish maiden, finding her only solace in kneeling beside the 'woman in the city which was a sinner' and sharing with her the rapture of the divine forgiveness. Nor was it the passing fancy of a morbid mood. In the great after-years she referred to the experience again and again, and set upon it the seal of her mature and mellow judgement. It gave direction to all her cultured and consecrated energies. She rose from her knees that day to be the sister, the protector, the champion of the despised creature by whose side she seemed to have knelt. And in one of her last addresses I find her giving thanks that 'God has done me the great honour of allowing me, for more than thirty years, to be the representative of the outcast



—the woman in the city which was a sinner. It is *her* voice which I have tried to utter.'

## III

*The Woman Which was a Sinner!* 'Whenever I think of this story,' says Gregory the Great, 'I feel more inclined to weep over it than to preach on it.'

*And, behold a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment.*

Thus the story opens. The best comment is Edersheim's. 'She had been listening to Him as He addressed the multitude,' says that great Jewish expositor. 'She heard Him say: *Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* As she looked into His face and listened to those words she believed that He was able to do as He had said. Like heaven's own music, as angels' songs that guide the wanderer home, the words rang in her ears. She followed Him, even into the Pharisee's house. There are times when we forget all else in one absorbing thought; when men's opinions—nay our own feelings of shame—are effaced by that one Presence; when the *Come unto Me* of Jesus is the all-in-all to us. The fountains of the great deep within are broken up.' So

was it with her that day, and tens of thousands in their anguish have since blessed her for the holy audacity that hurried her to her Lord.

'Her story,' says Sir J. R. Seeley in *Ecce Homo*, 'her story has gone to the heart of Christendom. It has given origin and even a name to institutions which are found wherever the Christian Church is found, and the object of which is to redeem women who have fallen from virtue. It has given to Christian art the figure of the Magdalene which when contrasted with the Venus of Greek sculpture represents in a very palpable manner the change which Christ has wrought in the moral feelings of mankind with respect to women.'

*And He turned to the woman and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house; thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Wherefore I say unto thee Her sins which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. And He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. . . . Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.*

'One evening,' says Boswell, 'Dr. Johnson, in my company, repeated to Mr. Langton, with great energy, in the Greek, our Saviour's gracious expression concerning "the woman in the city which was a sinner"—*Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.* "The manner of this dismission," added the doctor, "is exceedingly affecting."'

## IV

The qualities of Mary and of Martha were never more perfectly combined in one personality than in the case of Josephine Butler. There was a sense in which she spent the whole of her life kneeling at her Saviour's feet, washing them with her tears and wiping them with the hairs of her head. She was one of our greatest mystics.

'Long ago,' she says, 'I asked a gift of God, companionship with Christ. Shall I murmur because He, having granted my request, grants it in His own way? I thought of Mary, sitting at His feet. But He grants me the companionship of the malefactor, nailed to a neighbouring cross. I cannot grasp His hand, nor kiss His feet, nor lean on His breast as did the beloved disciple, for I am bound hand and foot, stretched on my cross till every nerve and muscle strains and aches. I can only turn my head to that side where the Lord hangs in pain also, so near that I can hear His breathing, His sighs, the beating of His heart. The cross which brings me so near to Him is the hindrance to a still nearer approach.'

She delighted in the mediæval saints and dwelt lingeringly on the classic examples of eminent devotion. She herself wrote a *Life of Jean Frederic Oberlin* and a *Life of Catherine of Siena*. In her *Catherine* Mr. Gladstone was intensely interested. 'It is evident,' he wrote, 'that Mrs. Butler is on the

level of her subject, and it is a very high level.'

Josephine Butler devoted the best energies of her life to her brave struggle to save the flotsam and jetsam of the world's womanhood. That was her mission. Yet, strangely enough, she reached, and reached profoundly, some of the most cultured minds of her time. Two of the finest literary efforts of that day are dedicated to Josephine Butler. The one is Dora Greenwell's *Patience of Hope*; the other is F. W. H. Myers' *St. Paul*. In the inscription to her book, Dora Greenwell, addressing Josephine Butler in Latin, says: 'From thee begun, with thee my word shall close; without thee nothing high my mind essays.' Frederic Myers' tribute is still more striking. He dedicates *St. Paul* to J. E. B. 'to whom I owe my very soul.' In another of his works Mr. Myers tells us that 'conversion came to me in a potent form—through the agency of Josephine Butler, whose name will never be forgotten in the annals of Christian philanthropy. She introduced me to Christianity, so to say, by an inner door; not to its encumbering forms and dogmas, but to its heart of fire.'

## v

But it is not with stories like these that the pages of her biography are crowded. She knelt on the day of her conversion beside the woman of the city which was a sinner. She felt drawn to her. The woman represented a class for whom, in those days,

nobody cared. Shortly afterwards, two incidents coloured Mrs. Butler's life. A travelling circus came to the neighbourhood. Mrs. Butler made the acquaintance of one of the girls who performed in it. She found that she loathed the life in which she was plunged, 'the most innocent part of which was her acrobatic performances.' One night this terrified creature escaped. She was pursued by the circus people and caught not far from Mrs. Butler's beautiful home. It was a warm Sunday evening. Mrs. Butler happened to be sitting at an open window. She heard the girl's piercing scream. It sounded in her ears as a cry of womanhood in distress, and she was haunted by it continually. This was the *first* incident; the *second* touched her still more closely. Her own little Eva, her only daughter, overbalanced on the banister rail, fell with a crash in the hall, and, a few hours later, died without regaining consciousness. For months it seemed as if the shock would shatter the mother's reason or destroy her health. But, when she recovered, she resolved that all the prodigal daughters of the world should be *her* daughters; and she devoted the rest of her days to one of the most beautiful ministries that the world has ever seen. In the course of those thirty years, thousands of woebegone creatures heard through her lips the Saviour's *Come unto Me*, and, like the woman in Simon's house, they knelt at His feet, washed those feet with their tears and wiped them with the hairs of their heads.



## VI

‘Regard me,’ she said, in one of her very last messages, ‘regard me as one whom sorrow and love have taught that none of the great human family are forgotten by Him who redeemed them, by the Eternal Father whose very name is LOVE.’ The capitals are hers. She lived to be eighty. One night—the last night but one of the old year—she went to her rest as usual. She closed her eyes in sleep and never opened them again. Or rather, when she opened them, she saw Him at whose pierced feet she had wept and from whose sacred lips she had received the glad assurance of absolution. And she found herself surrounded by a great company of women who, forgiven much and loving much, owed to *her* their happy entrance into the Kingdom of purity and light.

## VII

### JOHN WOOLMAN'S TEXT

#### I

JOHN WOOLMAN did a work that moved the world; but he did it when nobody was looking. He did it without snapping a twig or rustling a leaf; and he did it in such a way that nobody suspected him of having done it. One of our most eminent authorities—Mr. George Macaulay Trevelyan—shudders as he asks himself what would have become of the world if John Woolman had never come into it. Another—Mr. Alexander Smellie, M.A.—declares that no man, of any age or country, better deserves to be everlastingly remembered; whilst a third sums up everything by proclaiming John Woolman the most Christlike man who ever lived. Beyond that point, eulogy finds it impossible to go.

Notwithstanding his excessive modesty, the best record of John Woolman's lifework is his own. The only trouble is that, as Crabb Robinson so justly complains, Woolman conceals important events in which he himself played a most gallant part. Yet, for all that, it is difficult to imagine a more delightful book than the *Journal* as it stands. Crabb Robinson would agree in that. 'I have been reading *John Woolman's Journal*,' he says, 'it is a perfect

gem. His was a most beautiful soul.' Channing declares that it is incomparably the sweetest and purest autobiography in the language. 'Learn it by heart!' says Charles Lamb, in one of his loveliest essays. 'There are three autobiographies that I think of together,' says Mr. Trevelyan. 'They are *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, *The Confessions of Jean Jacques Rousseau* and *John Woolman's Journal*. Each of these men had soul-life abundantly and the power of recording his experiences; and each gave the impulse to a great current in the world's affairs—Augustine to the Mediæval Church, Rousseau to the French Revolution, and John Woolman to the abolition of slavery. But I am proud to feel that, of the three, John Woolman, the Anglo-Saxon, is by far the most attractive.' I wonder if we can find the hidden secret of so fragrant and potent an influence!

## II

In the picturesque backwoods of New Jersey the Quakers had it all their own way a couple of centuries ago. Surrounded on every hand by a riot of noble forestry—the maple and the magnolia; the rhododendron and the azalea; the chestnut and the basswood; the walnut and the hickory; the willow and the sycamore; the elm and the oak; the fir, the poplar and the silver birch—these tranquil souls lived at peace with all the world, and even established a perfect understanding with the fierce Indian tribes around them. In his monumental *His-*

*tory of the United States*, Bancroft declares that the formation of that peaceful colony in the gloomy recesses of the silent woods is one of the most beautiful incidents in the history of civilization. For there, he says, on the banks of the Delaware, there sprang up a race of men who laboured for inward stillness, who only desired to live in the spirit of truth and goodness, who learned to love God in all His manifestations in the visible world, and who testified, with gentle insistence, against cruelty towards the least creature in which His divine spirit had kindled the flame of life.

It was that subdued but fervent plea for tenderness towards all living things that opened the eyes of John Woolman to the realization of his soul's deep need. For it was into that Quaker settlement on the Delaware that, in the year 1720, John Woolman was born. A child of a Quaker home and a child of the American forest, he caught the spirit of both. He imbibed Quaker thoughts and Quaker ways from his earliest infancy; he wore the drab Quaker costume, and always spoke with a 'thee' and a 'thou.' Yet, at the same time, his boyish spirit revelled in the leafy solitudes around him. At day-break he listened with delight to the liquid carol of the mocking bird; during the day he loved to hear the woods ring with the plaintive note of the whip-poor-will; and at evening he strained his ears to catch the shrill cry of the nighthawk. In his solitary rambles he surprised furry creatures of all

sorts and sizes and became fondly familiar with their haunts and ways. He learned the habits of the rattlesnake and the beaver, the woodchuck and the porcupine; he knew where to look for the blue-bird and the prairie hen, the parrot and the humming-bird. His Quaker instincts taught him the preciousness of quietness; and in the silent woods the solitudes took him into their confidence and poured into his heart their secrets.

But one day a strange thing happened, a thing that startled and terrified him. He discovered something within himself that seemed utterly foreign to himself. And, in view of that Quaker testimony against cruelty of every kind, it filled him with horror, apprehension, and dismay. He was only a little child at the time; yet the emotions awakened by the episode made his blood run cold thirty years afterward when, for the first time, he committed the story to paper. We must let him tell it for himself.

‘On going to a neighbour’s house,’ he says, ‘I saw a robin sitting on her nest, and as I came near she went off. But, having young ones, she flew about, and, with many cries, expressed her concern for them. I stood and threw stones at her. One of them struck her and she fell down dead. At first I was pleased with the exploit, but, after a few minutes, I was seized with horror at having, in a sportive way, killed an innocent creature whilst she was caring for her young. I beheld her lying dead, and



reflected that those younger ones, of which she had taken such care, must perish for want of their mother. After some painful considerations on the subject, I climbed up the tree, took all the fledglings and killed them, supposing it better that they should die thus than that they should pine away and die miserably. There flashed into my mind the Scripture which says that the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel; and for some hours I could think of nothing but the horrible evil that I had committed.' He was in an agony of remorse. When the family bowed their heads in the reverent simplicity of their domestic worship, the desolating vision of the dead birds under the empty nest rushed back upon him even whilst his eyes were closed. The memory of his hard-heartedness tortured him in the night. He recalled all the gentle admonitions that he had heard from the lips of his Quaker teachers; and the words, as they returned to him, intensified his sense of the enormity of his transgression. It was not so much that there were some dead robins lying under a fir-tree; it was that there was a sinister something in his own heart that might at any moment surprise him by its wickedness and barbarity. He was only a child at the time, but the matter was a deep concern to him. 'I was much troubled,' he says.

Following hard on the heels of this agitating experience, and perhaps in consequence of it, there came a brighter one. The first experience was a

vision of *sin*; the second was a vision of *salvation*. He was still extremely young. 'Before I was seven years old,' he says, 'I began to be acquainted with the operation of divine love. Through the care of my parents, I was taught to read nearly as soon as I was capable of it; and as I went from school one day, I remember that, while my companions were playing by the way, I went forward out of sight, and, sitting down, I read the twenty-second chapter of the Book of Revelation: *He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb*. In reading it, my mind was drawn to seek after that pure habitation which I then believed God had prepared for His servants.' Thirty years afterwards he tells us that the spot by the roadside where he sat that day, and the sweetness that visited his mind when he read the gracious words, were still perfectly fresh and vivid in his memory.

## III

A pure river! *He showed me a pure river of water of life!* In one of the last articles that he wrote, Sir William Robertson Nicoll instituted a striking comparison between John Woolman and Santa Teresa. 'The Quaker diarist and the Spanish nun were alike,' he says, 'in their vision of waters—the living waters.' The analogy is very arresting. In my own treatment of *Santa Teresa's Text*, in *A Casket of Cameos*, I have already said that, 'with

Santa Teresa, it was water, water everywhere, and water all the time. It was a story of the mystic waters that first inclined her heart towards the Saviour. Her teaching is illustrated throughout by the symbolism of the stream. She seems to think in the terms of the pool and the cataract, the well and the shower, the laughing rivulet and the unfathomable ocean depths.' Sir William Robertson Nicoll points out that, 'like Teresa, John Woolman was influenced all his life by these flowing streams of divine grace.' Does he find his work particularly baffling and difficult? The record is sure to add that 'through the goodness of our Heavenly Father, the Well of Living Waters was opened to our encouragement and refreshment.' In his *Kim*, Mr. Rudyard Kipling pictures the old lama tramping along the highways and byways of India asking tirelessly one everlasting question. The River? Where is the River? The River of Buddha? The River that can cleanse from sin? The joy that rippled through the soul of John Woolman two centuries ago, and the joy that Teresa tasted two centuries earlier still, was the joy that they know who have found the river—the *pure river of the water of life*—the river that Kipling's old lama sought so ceaselessly but sought in vain.

The very thought of John Woolman makes those who are familiar with him long for another vision of those wondrous waters. Whittier sent a copy of *John Woolman's Journal* to a friend, and accom-

panied the gift with a poem of his own. In one of the verses he says of the *Journal* that it

Serves to strengthen  
Yearnings for a higher good,  
For the fount of living waters  
And diviner food.

The fact is that the living stream that poured itself into the soul of John Woolman as he sat by the side of the road that day, has, ever since, been pouring itself out again. And that is precisely what the Saviour said. *Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.* And again, *In the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, out from him shall flow rivers of living water.* Exactly so was it with John Woolman. Indeed, his biographers have found it impossible to avoid the exact imagery of these passages. 'His works,' says Mr. Alexander Smellie, M.A., 'his works follow him to this hour. He was one of the first to open fountains of healing and refreshment, of righteousness and mercy, the waters of which are still flowing in an undiminished flood.'

'*He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb,*' says John Woolman, in describing his conversion.

*'If any man drink of the water that I shall give him, it shall be in him, springing up into everlasting life,'* says the Saviour.

*'John Woolman opened fountains of healing and refreshment which are still flowing in an undiminished flood,'* says his biographer.

Like one who, from a hill-top, catches sight, here and there, of the shining waters, and is able to make out the river's course, let us glance at the life of John Woolman in the hope of tracing the flow of the fertilizing streams!

## IV

*He is twenty-one!* He has obtained a position in a store at Mount Holly and occupies his spare time in teaching a cluster of little children who gather eagerly about him. One day, as he sits at his desk in the store, a strange thing happens. 'My employer, having a negro woman, sold her, and desired me to write a bill of sale. The man who had bought her stood waiting. I felt very uneasy at the thought of writing an instrument of slavery for one of my fellow-creatures. I was so afflicted in my mind that I told my master, and the Quaker who had bought the woman, that I believed slave-keeping to be a practice inconsistent with the Christian religion.' The more Woolman pondered the matter the more it worried him. He resolved to give up his position and to trudge from settlement to settlement urging the Quakers to wipe their hands of the traffic in



slaves. And, as Mr. Trevelyan says, his *Journal* shows how this humblest and quietest of men used to travel round on foot, year after year, among those old-fashioned American Quakers, stirring their honest but sleepy consciences. A Quaker Socrates, with his searching, simple questions, he surpassed his Athenian prototype in love and patience and argumentative fairness. And when the Friends found that they could not answer John's questions, instead of poisoning him or locking him up as an anarchist, they let their slaves go free. 'Incredible as it may seem,' continues Mr. Trevelyan, 'they asked no one for compensation; but then the Quakers always were an odd people!' And thus that agitation began which, more than a century later, culminated in the emancipation of the slaves. Trace that good historic movement to its source, and there, at its fountain-head, you will find the solitary figure of John Woolman! How would it have gone with the world, Mr. Trevelyan asks, if that poor clerk had kept to himself those queer questionings of his about holding fellow-men as property? But he did *not* stifle his conscience: he never did; and, because he was true to the light that shone upon him, he, in his turn, illumined the whole world. He drank of the mystic waters, and out from him there gushed the streams that made the earth more fair.

He is *forty-three*! In his pilgrimages through Pennsylvania, he has often 'felt inward drawings' towards the Indians. He has frequently met them

in the woods. But why not go to their settlements and tell them of *the pure river, clear as crystal, flowing out of the throne of God and of the Lamb?* He talks it over, first with his wife, and then with some of the other Quakers. They remind him of the barbarities that the red men have recently perpetrated. Farms have been raided; forts have been destroyed; villages have been set on fire; the scalping knife never seems at rest. But John Woolman knows no fear. He set out for the Indian settlement at Wehaloosing on the Susquehannah; mastered the language and won the hearts of the Indians; and for some years John Woolman, with his Quaker garb, his tall form and his drooping shoulders, John Woolman, with his shock of black hair, his pale face and his quiet but pleading eyes, was a familiar and honoured figure in the wigwams and at the campfires of the red men.

He is *fifty-two*! It has long been his desire to visit England, and now he is at York. On the voyage across the Atlantic the rough sailors became very fond of the quaint backwoodsman who insisted on travelling steerage and sharing their lot. And his *Journal* proves that his heart was overflowing with affection and compassion for them. After a somewhat chilly reception at the hands of the Quakers in London—who failed at first to understand him—he entered York on foot on September 27, 1772. Henry Tuke, a young Quaker of eighteen, went out to meet him. ‘I have frequently

heard my father speak of this walk,' said Henry Tuke's son, many years afterwards, 'and of the indescribable sweetness of John Woolman's company and the pleasure with which he remembered it.'

He had come to York to die—a victim of small-pox.

'My life is in Christ,' he said, 'my whole dependence is on the Lord Jesus who, I trust, will forgive me my sins: this is all I can hope for.'

Seeing a young Quakeress weeping near the bed, he begged her to wipe away her tears.

'I would rather thou wouldst guard against weeping for me,' he said. 'Rejoice evermore and in everything give thanks. I sorrow not, though I have had some painful conflicts; but now they seem over and matters well settled; I shall soon look on the face of my dear Redeemer, for sweet is His voice and His countenance is comely.'

And so, to the last, he drank with delight of the living waters. Amidst his greatest ordeals he found refreshment there. He tells how, one dark night, when he was on his way to preach to a tribe of hostile Indians, a drenching rain set in. He was far from tent or habitation; it was impossible to light a fire; he lay down in the forest and all night long the rain pitilessly lashed his face. 'But,' he adds, 'I found my soul filled with comfort as I meditated on the love of God.' Those divine fountains never failed him. And, according to the promise, the re-

freshing streams poured out from him; the slaves were emancipated; the Indians were evangelized; the whole world was sweetened and enriched; and, as Whittier sings, his *Journal* still sets thousands yearning for the living waters. For the water that his Saviour gave him was *in him, a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.*

## VIII

### FYODOR DOSTOYEVSKY'S TEXT

#### I

RUSSIA had never seen such a funeral. It was in many respects the most extraordinary demonstration of public feeling ever witnessed in the Czar's dominions. The sorrow was a national sorrow, the loftiest and the lowliest alike lamented; the cities were in tears. Forty thousand men followed the coffin to the grave. 'When I heard of Dostoyevsky's death,' says Tolstoy, 'I felt that I had lost a kinsman, the closest and the dearest, and the one of whom I had most need.' The students of Russia, to whom he had been a father, sent an open letter to his widow.

'Dostoyevsky's ideals,' they said, 'will never be forgotten. From generation to generation we shall hand them down as a precious inheritance from our great and beloved teacher. His memory will never be extinguished in the hearts of the youth of Russia, and, in years to come, we shall teach our children to love and honour his name. Dostoyevsky will always stand out brightly before us in the battle of life; for it was he who taught us the possibility of preserving the purity of the soul undefiled in every position of life and in all conceivable conditions and circumstances.'



Clearly, then, we have here a man among men; a man who stirred the hearts of thousands; a man who, through his books, still speaks to multitudes. What is the secret of his deep and widespread influence? Let us go back a day or two!

## II

That never-to-be-forgotten funeral took place on February 12, 1881. On February 9, Dostoyevsky lay dying. 'When he awoke that morning,' his daughter tells us, 'my mother realized that his hours were numbered.'

Brave little mother! so this is the end of her fifteen years of romance! In the novels of Dostoyevsky there is no prettier story than the story of the meeting of these two. Dostoyevsky was forty-five at the time. Through voluntarily taking over the debts of his dead brother, his finances had become involved. Moreover, he had fallen into the clutches of an unscrupulous publisher, for whom he had contracted to write a novel on the understanding that, if it was not finished by a certain date, all the author's copyrights would fall into the publisher's hands. As the date approached, the impossibility of the task became evident, and ruin stared him in the face. Somebody advised him to get a stenographer; but no stenographer could be found. There was, it is true, a girl of nineteen who knew shorthand; but lady stenographers were then unknown; and the girl doubted if her people would consent to her

taking the appointment. However, Dostoyevsky's fame removed the parents' scruples, and she set to work. On her way to the novelist's house, she used to tell her daughter afterwards, she tried to imagine what their first session would be like. 'We shall work for an hour,' she thought, 'and then we shall talk of literature.' Dostoyevsky had had an epileptic attack the night before; he was absent-minded, nervous, and peremptory. He seemed quite unconscious of the charms of his young stenographer, and treated her as a kind of Remington typewriter. He dictated the first chapter of his novel in a harsh voice, complained that she did not write fast enough, made her read aloud what he had dictated, scolded her, and declared that she had not understood him. She was crushed, and left the house determined never to return. But she thought better of it during the night, and, next morning, resumed her post. Little by little, Dostoyevsky became conscious that his Remington machine was a charming young girl and an ardent admirer of his genius. He confided his troubles to her and she pitied him. In her girlish dream, she had pictured him petted and pampered; instead, she saw a sick man, weary, badly fed, badly lodged, badly served, hunted down like a wild beast by merciless creditors, and ruthlessly exploited by selfish relatives. She conceived the idea of protecting Dostoyevsky, of sharing the heavy burden he had taken upon his shoulders, and of comforting him in his sorrows. She was not in

love with this man, who was more than twenty-five years her senior, but she understood his beautiful soul and revered his genius. She determined to save Dostoyevsky from his publishers, and succeeded. She begged him to prolong the hours of dictation, spent the night copying out what she had taken down in the day, and worked with such goodwill that, to the chagrin of the avaricious publisher, the novel was ready on the appointed day. And, shortly afterwards, he married her.

And now, fifteen years afterwards—the funeral was on the anniversary of the wedding—Dostoyevsky is dying!

‘He made us come into the room,’ his daughter says, ‘and, taking our little hands in his, he begged my mother to read the *Parable of the Prodigal Son*. He listened with his eyes closed, absorbed in his thoughts. “My children,” he said in his feeble voice, “never forget what you have just heard. Have absolute faith in God and never despair of His pardon. I love you dearly, but my love is nothing compared with the love of God for all those He has created. Even if you should be so unhappy as to commit a crime in the course of your life, never despair of God. You are His children; humble yourselves before Him, as before your father, implore His pardon, and He will rejoice over your repentance, as the father rejoiced over that of the *Prodigal Son*.”’

A few minutes later Dostoyevsky passed trium-

phantly away. 'I have been present,' says Aimee Dostoyevsky, 'at many deathbeds, but none was so radiant as that of my father. He saw without fear the end approaching. His was a truly Christian death. He was ready to appear before his Eternal Father hoping that, to recompense him for all that he had suffered in this life, God would give him another great work to do, another great task to accomplish.'

## III

Now before we turn on tiptoe from this silent room, let us examine, reverently and carefully, the faded and battered New Testament lying at the dead man's side—the Testament from which, a few moments ago, the mother read in brave but broken accents the story of the *Prodigal Son*. It has a history; and that history may reveal much of what we wish to know.

For this man, who has just died so restfully, has looked death in the face before. His career is as romantic as his novels; indeed, his novels are, in the main, a reflection of his career. As a small boy he revels in historical romances—particularly those of Sir Walter Scott—and he enters so vividly into the thrilling experiences of the various characters that he often faints with the volume clasped in his hands. He is fond, too, of the open air. 'All my life,' he says, 'I have loved the forest, with its mushrooms, its fruits, its insects, its birds, and its squirrels; I revelled in the scent of its damp leaves. Even at

this moment, as I write, I can smell the aroma of the birches.' As a young fellow, he interests himself in the welfare of his country; he joins a society that meets to discuss public questions; and, at the age of twenty-eight, is arrested for meddling with such matters. With thirty-three others he is charged with conspiracy, and, after a hurried trial, is sentenced to death. The condemned men afterwards discover that the sentence was a grim jest on the part of the Czar and his lieutenants, who thought, by this expedient, to frighten them.

On a bitter morning, with the temperature many degrees below freezing point, they are led to the scaffold; their ordinary clothes are exchanged for shrouds; and thus, nearly naked, they are compelled to stand for half an hour whilst the burial service is being slowly read. Facing them, stand the soldiers with their muskets. A pile of coffins is stacked suggestively in a corner of the yard. At the last moment, with the muskets actually at the shoulders of the guards, a white flag is waved, and it is announced that the Czar has commuted the sentence to one of ten years' exile in Siberia. Several of the prisoners lost their reason under the strain; several others died shortly afterwards. Dostoyevsky passed courageously through the ordeal; but it affected his nerves; he never recalled the experience without a shudder, and he refers to it with horror in several of his books.

On Christmas Eve, 1849, he commenced the



dreadful journey to Omsk, and remained in Siberia 'like a man buried alive, nailed down in his coffin.' On his arrival in that desolate region, two women slip a New Testament into his hand, and, taking advantage of a moment when the officer's back is turned, whisper to him to search it carefully at his leisure. Between the pages he finds a note for twenty-five roubles. The money is a vast comfort to him: but the New Testament itself proves an infinitely vaster one.

His daughter tells us that, during his exile, that Testament was his only solace. 'He studied the precious volume from cover to cover; pondered every word; learned much of it by heart; and never forgot it. All his works are saturated with it, and it is this which gives them their power. Many of his admirers have said to me that it was a strange chance that ordained that my father should have only the gospels to read during the most important and formative years of his life. But was it a chance? Is there such a thing as chance in our lives? The work of Jesus is not finished; in each generation He chooses His disciples, signs to them to follow Him, and gives them the same power over the human heart that He gave to the poor fishermen of Galilee.' Aimee Dostoyevsky believed that it was by that divine hand that the Testament was presented to her father that day. 'Throughout his life,' she adds, 'he would never be without his old prison Testament, the faithful friend that had con-

soled him in the darkest hours of his life. He always took it with him on his travels and kept it in a drawer of his writing-table, within reach of his hand. He consulted it in all the important moments of his life,' and, as we have seen, it was his comfort in the hour of death.

## IV

It was in Siberia that Dostoyevsky discovered the beauty of the *Parable of the Prodigal Son*. Siberia was the far country. It was there that he saw the prodigal among the husks and the swine. His companions were the lowest of the low and the vilest of the vile. 'Imagine,' he says, 'an old crazy wooden building that should long ago have been broken up as useless. In the summer it is unbearably hot, in the winter unbearably cold. All the boards are rotten. On the ground filth lies an inch thick; every instant one is in danger of slipping. The small windows are so frozen over that even by day one can scarcely read; the ice on the panes is three inches thick. We are packed like herrings in a barrel. The atmosphere is intolerable; the prisoners stink like pigs; there are vermin by the bushel; we sleep upon bare boards.' And, in the midst of this disgusting and degrading scene, I catch a glimpse of Dostoyevsky. At first glance he is by no means an attractive figure. He is small and slender, round-shouldered and thick-necked. He is clothed in convict motley, one leg black, the other grey; the col-

ours of his coat likewise divided; his head half-shaved and bent forward in deep thought. His face is half the face of a Russian peasant and half the face of a dejected criminal. He is shy, taciturn, rather ugly, and extremely awkward. He has a flattened nose; small piercing eyes under eyelashes which tremble with nervousness; and a long thick untidy beard with fair hair. The stamp of his epilepsy is distinctly upon him. We see all this at a glance, and the glance is not alluring. But Nekrasov, the poet, has given us the picture as the convicts saw it. In this picture Dostoyevsky appears almost sublime. He moves among his fellow-prisoners with his New Testament in his hand, telling them its stories and reading to them its words of comfort and grace. He seems to them a kind of prophet, gently rebuking their blasphemies and excesses, and speaking to them of poetry, of science, of God, and of the love of Christ. It is his way of pointing the prodigal to the path that leads to the Father's heart and the Father's home.

## v

For this was the treasure that he found in that New Testament! This was the beauty of the story of the *Prodigal Son*! It revealed the way to the Father. 'One sees the truth more clearly when one is unhappy,' he writes from Siberia. 'And yet God gives me moments of perfect peace; in such mo-

ments I love and believe that I am loved; in such moments I have formulated my creed, wherein all is clear and holy to me. This creed is extremely simple: here it is. I believe that there is nothing lovelier, deeper, more sympathetic, more rational, more manly and more perfect than the Saviour; I say to myself with jealous love that not only *is* there no one else like Him, but that there *could* be no one. I would even say more; if anyone could prove to me that Christ is outside the truth, and if the truth really did exclude Christ, I should prefer to stay with Christ and not with truth!' Alexander Pushkin has a poem about a poor knight who, in a moment of supreme exaltation, sees the Holy Virgin at the foot of the Cross. Dostoyevsky was very fond of the poem; whenever he read it, his face was radiated, his voice trembled, his eyes filled with tears. 'For it was,' his daughter says, 'the story of his own soul. He, too, was a poor knight; he, too, had a beatific vision; but it was not the mediæval Virgin who appeared to him, but Christ who came to him in his prison and called him to follow Him.'

*Christ——no one like Christ!*

*Christ——the Saviour!*

*Christ——the way to the Father!*

On his bended knees Dostoyevsky blessed God for sending him into the Siberian steppes. For it was amidst those stern and awful solitudes that he found the road that leads to the Father's home.

## VI

That old prison Testament, and the revelation that it brought to him, were in his thoughts through all the years that followed. We catch fitful glimpses of the battered volume in all his writings. I pick up *The Possessed*, and I find, near the close of the book, as the story draws to its climax, that Stepan Trofimovitch is taken ill and Sofya Matveyevna sits by his couch, reading. And what is she reading? She is reading two striking passages from the New Testament!

And in *Crime and Punishment* there is a really tremendous scene. In his article on *Dostoyevsky* in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Mr. Thomas Secombe, M.A., declares that, for poignancy and emotional intensity, there is nothing in modern literature to equal it. It describes Raskolnikoff, the conscience-stricken and self-tormented murderer, creeping at dead of night to the squalid waterside hovel in which Sonia lives. Sonia is part of the flotsam and jetsam of the city's wreckage. The relationship between these two was a relationship of sympathy; each had sinned terribly; and each had sinned for the sake of others rather than for self. On a rickety little table in Sonia's room stands a tallow candle fixed in an improvised candlestick of twisted metal. In the course of earnest conversation, Sonia glances at a book lying on a chest of drawers. He takes it down. It is a New Testament. He hands it to Sonia and begs her to read it to him. 'Sonia



opens the book; her hands tremble; the words stick in her throat. Twice she tries without being able to utter a syllable.' At length she succeeds. And then——

'She closes the book: she seems afraid to raise her eyes on Raskolnikoff: her feverish trembling continues. The dying piece of candle dimly lights up this low-ceilinged room in which an assassin and a harlot have just read the Book of Books!'

This is in the middle of the story. On the last page, when Raskolnikoff and Sonia have both been purified by suffering, Raskolnikoff is still cherishing in his prison cell the New Testament which, at his earnest request, Sonia has brought him.

*Here is Raskolnikoff—a Prodigal Son!*

*Here is Sonia—a Prodigal Daughter!*

*Here is the Book of Books—pointing the prodigals to the Father's House!*

The candle in Sonia's wretched room burned lower and lower, and at last sputtered out. But the candle that, in that Siberian prison, was lit in Dostoyevsky's soul, grew taller and taller the longer it burned. Like the path of the just, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day, its light waxed brighter and clearer. It flung its radiance right around the world: it found a reflection in the glowing lives of thousands; it lit up Dostoyevsky's death chamber with the glory of a great hope; and it illumined his flight to that Celestial City in which they need neither candle nor sun.

## IX

### JOHN HAMPDEN'S TEXT

#### I

No man ever had as many claims upon the grateful homage of his countrymen as John Hampden; no man occupies a more enviable place in history. He represents our English Puritanism at its very best. In him it flowered; he is its most finished product. He was an aristocrat of the spiritual, as well as of the social and intellectual, realms. In Puritanism's golden age, he is its most courtly, its most cultured, its most devout, and its most engaging figure. In contrast with the experience of most men, his piety deepened as his power increased; his goodness became more marked as his greatness became more evident; his fearless and commanding statesmanship was only equalled by his exquisite simplicity. Historians like Clarendon, unrivalled in the analysis of character, regard him as the *mightiest* man of his time; writers like Richard Baxter, eminent both for devotion and scholarship, speak of him as the *best*. In his *Saints' Everlasting Rest*, Baxter enumerates the pleasures that he hopes to enjoy in the world to come; and, conspicuously among them, he mentions the delight of meeting the excellent John Hampden. Many years afterwards he amplified the eulogy. 'I remember,' he says, 'a moderate prudent old gen-

tleman who told me that, if he might choose what person he would be in the world, he would be John Hampden.'

Few men are really missed. However prominent the place that they have filled, they fall, and, in public life, are soon forgotten. The surge of affairs closes over them, as the waves close over a stately vessel that has foundered in mid-ocean. But Hampden is the exception. No man ever left such an obvious blank in the national life as he did. Clarendon declares that, if their whole army had been annihilated, the consternation of the Parliamentarians could not have been greater. Nor was the grief confined to his own party. Although he lost his life in resisting the arbitrary assumptions of the throne, no man was more sorry than the King to hear of Hampden's death. For the King knew Hampden; he admired and trusted him; and he built his hopes for the days to come on the prospect of seeing so wise, so just, and so good a man in power. During the engagement in which he fell, Hampden wore upon his breast a locket bearing the inscription

Against my king I never fight,  
But for my king and country's right.

The official chronicle of the period contains a record of his death which, when we reflect that the man to whom it refers died in leading the revolutionary forces, seems amazing. 'The loss of Colonel Hampden,' it says, 'goeth near the heart of every man

that loves the good of his king and country. The memory of this deceased colonel is such that, in every age to come, it will more and more be had in honour and esteem; a man so religious, and of that prudence, judgement, temper, valour, and integrity, that he hath left few his like behind him.' The loss, indeed, seemed irreparable. In comparison with Hampden, Cromwell appeared 'a rugged and clownish soldier,' incapable of high command. And, as the official record predicted, time, so far from healing the wound, merely accentuated the loss that the nation had sustained. Years afterwards, as Macaulay says, 'England sadly missed the sobriety, the self-command, the perfect soundness of judgement, the perfect rectitude of intention, to which the history of revolutions furnishes no parallel or furnishes a parallel in Washington alone.' How are we to account for this extraordinary combination of transcendent gifts and graces? It is not difficult. Come with me!

## II

And here we are, in the early spring of 1603, sauntering down a bridle-path that winds its way through one of the most entrancing and picturesque valleys in the county of Buckingham. The great beech-woods stretch away in every direction, diversified here and there by patches of box and juniper. The song of the birds is almost deafening; whilst the wild flowers drape every bank and knoll

with beauty. Every now and again we come on delightful dells in which ferns run riot and prim-roses twinkle. But, look! Away there, on the crest of a distant hill, we catch our first glimpse of one of the stateliest homes of England. It is approached by glorious avenues of poplars, oaks, and elms. This is the home of the Hampdens. The old mansion, like so many of its kind, is a medley of architecture. If you walk around its walls and windows, examining its arches and gables, the stones will become garrulous and will gossip to you of the Normans, the Plantagenets, and the Tudors. However long you live, you will never forget your visit to this charming spot. For, as Lord Nugent says, no one who has a heart for high and breezy hills, for green glades enclosed within the shadowy stillness of ancient woods, for avenues leading to a noble house on whose walls the centuries have written their story; no one who loves such things can visit the residence of Hampden and not do justice to the love which its master bore it, and to that stronger feeling which could lead him from such an idyllic retirement to the toils and perils to which he entirely devoted his life.

But, beautiful as all this is, I have something still more beautiful to show you. You ask me, naturally enough, as to the present owner of this ancestral home. The owner is a child. He was born in 1594—six years after the defeat of the Armada—so that he is now a boy of nine. Here he



is, sprawling on the hearthrug, his fine head, with its piercing eyes and its shock of brown hair, resting on his mother's knee. He wears a velvet suit with silk stockings and silver buckles. They are great companions, these two. He loves to hear his mother tell of the coming of the Spanish galleons, of the anxiety that brooded over the nation as it approached, and of the delirious joy of the famous victory. She would tell him of Drake and Hawkins and Frobisher, and all the redoubtable heroes of that stirring time. She had known them well; had not Sir Francis kissed her boy's forehead just before sailing on his last voyage? But, within a few months of the child's birth, they had all passed away. And so had her husband; he and Sir Francis Drake died at about the same time; and, at the age of three, this boy in the velvet suit was left the heir to this glorious estate. You ask me why, this evening, his face seems overcast. Is it some sad story that his mother is telling him? It is. She is telling him that the Queen—the most romantic of all his boyish heroines—is dead! The spacious times of great Elizabeth are over. She reminds him that his grandfather, old Griffith Hampden, once entertained the good Queen in this very house, and cut the great drive through the woods—the Queen's Gap—specially for her approach. It was in the course of these heart-to-heart talks between the young mother and her infant son that the foundations of his character were laid.

## III

For he is living in great times, this boy with the velvet suit and silver buckles. He was not quite three when Sir Francis Drake died; he was nine when the great Queen went to her rest; he was ten in the days of the Gunpowder Plot; he was seventeen when the Authorized Version of the Bible was translated, twenty-two when Shakespeare died, twenty-four when Sir Walter Raleigh was executed, and was twenty-six when the *Mayflower* sailed. The following year he himself entered Parliament.

These were the formative and plastic years of Hampden's life, and the thoughtful and impressionable youth felt to the full the influence of these historic events. But something greater still was happening in England; and it was *this* that affected him most of all. For it was whilst John Hampden was lying in his cradle that the Bible achieved its greatest triumph in English hearts and English homes. Of a sudden, the whole nation gave itself to the reading of the old Geneva Bible, and, as a consequence, the life of the nation was transfigured. Green says that neither our nation nor any other ever experienced so remarkable a change. The people became the people of a single book. The words, falling on ears which custom had not deadened, awoke a startling enthusiasm. It was in this atmosphere that Puritanism was born; and it was this atmosphere that enfolded like a perfume the boyhood of John Hampden.

## A Faggot of Torches

Many an evening mother and son spent together over the Bible stories. The boys—for John had a younger brother—were never tired of Abraham's wonderful pilgrimage, of Lot's flight from the burning cities, of Jacob's ladder of light, of Joseph's coat of many colours, of Moses in the ark of bulrushes, of Samson and the Philistines, of Gideon and the Bedouins, of Samuel's midnight call, of David and Goliath, of Daniel in the den of lions, of Belshazzar's feast, of the three Hebrew children in the burning fiery furnace, nor of the wonderful story from the New Testament, the sweetest story of all. It is remarkable how these stories rushed back upon his mind in the stirring days that followed. Thus I find him writing, at the age of thirty-seven, to Sir John Eliot. Sir John is troubled because his elder son has set his heart on going to France; the father dreads lest his boy should fall under pernicious influences there. John Hampden bids him be of good comfort. The father has done his best for the lad; let him leave the rest in higher hands. 'Then shall he be sure to find in France Him whom Abraham found in Sychem, and whom Joseph found in Egypt, under whose wing alone is perfect safety.'

Then, having read to the boys their story, she taught them a verse from the Psalms. As Mr. Prothero, in his *Psalms in Human Life*, points out, 'the Psalter was, to the Puritans, the book of books. Psalms were sung at Lord Mayor's feasts and city

banquets. Soldiers sang them on the march, by the camp fire, on parade, in the storm of battle. The ploughman carolled them over his furrows; the carter hummed them by the side of his wagon. They were the song-books of ladies and their lovers; and, if Shakespeare is to be trusted, they were even sung to hornpipes at rustic festivals.' From the Psalms, therefore, the boys learn their verses. This evening the lesson is from the forty-first. '*I said, O Lord, be merciful unto me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee.*' The boys repeat the words after her once or twice; and then, when they can say them without a mistake, they throw their arms about their mother's neck, kiss her, and scamper off to bed.

*His Mother! His Bible!*

*His Bible! His Mother!*

Oh, the debt that we Britons owe to British mothers and to British Bible!

#### IV

He was only a boy in those days, and he learned the words with a light and merry heart. But there came stern and terrible days—days of tumult and bloodshed and imprisonment—in which those same words rushed back upon his mind and spoke to him in very different accents. In those selfsame simple words he afterwards discovered wonders that, as a boy at his mother's knee, he never for a moment suspected.

*'I said, Lord, be merciful to me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee.'*

It is the *Penitent* bowing in the True Confessional; it is the *Patient* lying in the Noblest Hospital; it is the *Prisoner* standing before the Highest Tribunal.

The *Penitent* cries: *I have sinned! Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned!*

The *Patient* cries: *Heal, O Lord, heal my soul!*

The *Prisoner* cries: *Be merciful! Be merciful!*

Every sin is an affront to the Majesty of Heaven, and, as such, calls for contrite confession. *'I have sinned against Thee!'* It is a personal insult to the Most High; it is a clenched fist upraised in the face of God; it is the bitter answer of earth's hate to heaven's eternal love.

Every sin is a violation of the divine law. It is a defiance of the divine authority. The outraged commandment demands vindication; the mandates of omnipotence cannot be broken with impunity. *'Be merciful,'* cries the guilty and convicted rebel, *'be merciful to me!'*

Every sin is a self-inflicted gash on the sinner's own soul. Its vitality is reduced; its resistance is weakened; its health is impaired; it is wounded and in pain. *'Heal my soul!'*

*'I said, Lord, be merciful unto me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee.'*

Happy the man who comes forth from the solemn hush of that Confessional with the great, glad



words of absolution ringing in his ravished ears! Happy the man who leaves that *Hospital* rejoicing in the healing of his soul, in the restoration of his powers, in the fulness and vigour of health! Happy the man who departs from that *Tribunal* with the clemency and acquittal of the Court!

*Absolved!*

*Healed!*

*Discharged!*

Into this threefold transport John Hampden entered. I cannot fix the exact date at which the words that he learned that evening at his mother's knee came back to him with such new and vivid force. He was quite a young man when the great change came over him. 'In his entrance into the world,' says Lord Clarendon, 'he indulged himself in all the sports and exercises and company which were used by men of the most jolly conversation. On a sudden, however, from a life of great gaiety he retired to extraordinary sobriety and strictness, to a more reserved and melancholy society.' It may have been *then* that he found himself breathing the *Penitent's* prayer for absolution, uttering the *Patient's* cry for healing, and presenting the *Prisoner's* plea for mercy.

*'I said, Lord, be merciful unto me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee.'*

It was then, at any rate, that the spirit of John Hampden was born anew; and, thus re-born, he entered upon his illustrious and invaluable career.

## V

All the historians agree that, in the days that immediately followed, there were moments when the destinies of England trembled in the balance. The throne was tottering; the institutions of national life were in the melting-pot; everything was at risk. In that crisis, the issue hung upon Hampden. 'The eyes of all men,' as Clarendon says, 'were fixed upon him as the pilot that must steer the vessel through the tempests and rocks which threatened it. And I am persuaded that his authority and interest and his power of wisely governing the people, were greater now than any man's in his time or any time.' 'We can scarcely express,' says Macaulay, 'the admiration that we feel for a mind so great. Almost every part of this virtuous and blameless life is a precious and splendid portion of our national history.'

Few pages in our annals are more affecting than those which describe the death of Hampden. With his head bending down, and his hands resting on his horse's neck, he was seen riding off the field before the action was done—'a thing,' says Lord Clarendon, 'he never used to do, and from which it was concluded that he was hurt.' He turned his horse's head towards the lovely home at which he had wooed and won the bride of his youth; but, cut off by hostile troops, he changed his mind and rode in another direction. His strength fast failing, he

was taken to a cottager's home to die. For six days he occupied himself, though in excruciating agony, in giving instructions concerning the disposal of public affairs. Just before the end he took the Lord's Supper, and then, thoroughly spent, he turned his face to the wall that he might die in prayer.

'O Lord of Hosts,' he was heard to say, 'great is Thy mercy; just and holy are Thy dealings with us sinful men. Pardon, O Lord, my manifold transgressions. O Lord, save my bleeding country. Have these realms in Thy special keeping. Let the King see his error; and turn the hearts of his councillors from the malice and wickedness of their designs. Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!'

There was a pause. And then, in a feebler voice, he continued: 'O Lord, save my country; *O Lord, be merciful to——*' But here speech failed him. He fell back in the bed and expired.

'*O Lord, be merciful to——*' The old prayer—the *Penitent's* prayer for absolution; the *Patient's* cry for healing; the *Prisoner's* plea for mercy—was with him to the last.

'*I said, O Lord, be merciful to me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee.*'

It is one of those prayers that has been offered a thousand thousand times, and never once in vain.

## X

### JOHN KEBLE'S TEXT

#### I

JOHN KEBLE cherished in his heart a golden secret, and, after discovering its unutterable value, he spent all his days in trying to impart it. He saturated his soul with the stillness and peace of the Gloucestershire village in which he was born. As soon as his college days were done, he astounded all his admirers by tossing to the winds the splendid prospects that were opening before him in order that he might go back to his old home at Fairford to become his father's curate. It seemed incredible, as Dean Church says, that the most distinguished academic of his day—honoured and envied by everyone—should retire from Oxford at the height of his fame to busy himself with a few hundred of Gloucestershire peasants in a miserable curacy! But John Keble knew what he was doing. He had nourished his inner life on the quietude of the countryside. The fragrance of the clover, the silver purity of the brook, the sweetness of the hedgerows, the sparkle of the dew-drenched meadows, and the song of the thrushes in the copse had woven themselves into the very fabric of his being.

Let me point him out to you! There he sits under the shelter of an immense beech-tree, watching the

partridges scurrying hither and thither on the opposite bank. He is not exactly a handsome man, although his open countenance, his noble forehead and his beautiful hair go a long way towards atoning for any defects you discover in his figure. His fine eyes are full of playfulness, of intelligence, and of deep feeling. They seem to read you through and through; and detect your meaning before you have expressed yourself in words. His unaffected simplicity, his genuine humility, his charming innocence and utter unworldliness are written unmistakably upon his countenance. And yet, although a smile seems to be perpetually playing about his lips, there is deep gravity in his expression and even an element of sadness. For John Keble is worried.

He is worried about the world. It seems to him, as he strolls across these golden cornfields and saunters down these leafy lanes, that the people of England are steeped in the lethargy of a deadly indifference, whilst the Church is engrossed in fierce and bitter controversies. What can he do to mend matters? It would be useless for him to fulminate against the evils of his time: such a course would only add to the babel of discordant voices. He learned in the stillness a more excellent way.

John Keble always reminds me of Elisha. When Elisha was asked to cleanse the tainted stream that was working such havoc in the city, he saw at once that it could never be purified by *taking* something



from it. He must *add* something to it. He threw salt into the fountains and the waters were healed. John Keble had the wisdom to see that it would be useless, and worse than useless, to cry out against the apathy of the world and the schisms of the Church. He felt that he must do something constructive, something positive. He must heal the waters by adding to them some purifying power. If only he could cultivate, amidst the green, green fields of Fairford, the intimate friendship of Jesus! If only he could develop within himself a soul of ineffable sweetness and trustfulness and grace! And then—if only he could pour the secret treasure of his soul into the troubled and disturbed life of his country! If only he could! And he did!

## II

As he crossed and re-crossed the village green at Fairford, and moved up and down those country roads, he meditated on the themes that, in the course of the Church's calendar, would demand his attention on the coming Sunday. A born poet, his thoughts struggled to express themselves in verse; and, as soon as he reached the parsonage, he pencilled down the poems that had imparted an added delight to his walk. The manuscripts grew in number until he had a poem for every day of the Church's year. His friends got to hear of them and pressed him to publish. In 1823 he showed them to Thomas Arnold, afterwards the famous

headmaster of Rugby. 'It is my firm opinion,' said Arnold, 'that nothing equal to these poems exists in our language. The wonderful knowledge of Scripture, the purity of heart and the richness of thought that they exhibit, I never saw paralleled.' Thus encouraged, a new idea seized upon Keble's mind. Perhaps this bundle of manuscripts was the cruse of salt by means of which the tainted waters were to be healed! Perhaps it was through this channel that he was to pour the treasure of his own soul into the life of his country! He decided to publish anonymously, the verses that all the world now know as *The Christian Year*. As the keynote of the work, he decided to inscribe a text upon the title-page, and he never hesitated for a moment as to what the text should be. It was the text that had been singing itself over and over in his soul during all his rambles amidst those delicious solitudes of his. It is the text that is inscribed upon his monument at Westminster Abbey. *In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.*

'It is the chief purpose of these pages,' he says in the foreword, 'to exhibit a *soothing* tendency.' The word is eminently characteristic of him. 'I woo the *soothing* art,' he says in one place; and, in others, he speaks of the *soothing* power of Nature and the *soothing* calm of the Communion service. It seemed to him that the world was fevered and needed soothing. If only he could soothe it! Per-

## A Faggot of Torches

haps the poems would achieve that end! He says of them that

. . . . their cherished haunt hath been  
By streamlet, violet bank and orchard green  
'Mid lonely views and scenes of common earth.

The fact that, during the poet's lifetime, the book went through nearly two hundred editions—totaling a hundred and fifty thousand copies—sufficiently proved that, in *The Christian Year*, he had given the world the antidote that its malady required. The world needed saving; it needed strengthening; it needed soothing. And Keble's message met its every need. *In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.*

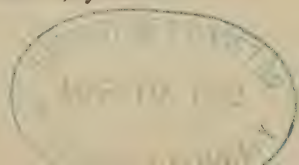
He lived to be an old man and his life grew in beauty as the years rolled by. 'Everybody loved him,' says Sir John Taylor Coleridge, who, after enjoying his intimate friendship for fifty-five years, became his biographer, 'everybody loved him, and loved him with the best kind of love. Loving him was like loving goodness itself; you felt that what was good in him was bringing into life all that was best in you.' There are few things in our literature more touching than the way in which, after thirty years of perfect wedded life, John Keble and his wife set out together on life's last journey. She was on her death-bed when the call came to him. They wheeled him from her room into the next, husband and wife giving each other a fond but

silent glance of farewell. His spirit was the first to pass. The news was broken to her and she smiled. She bade the family kneel round her bed and give thanks that he had been spared the sorrow of surviving her. And then she, too, breathed out her soul to God, and the new-made grave of John Keble opened to receive her. In death as in life, they found strength in the stillness. *In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.*

## III

Every visitor to the city of Wittenberg makes a point of inspecting two very old and very famous houses. The one is the house of Martin Luther; the other is the house of Philip Melancthon. Tourists passing from the one to the other are met by a stream of sightseers who are viewing the two houses in the opposite order. The path that is daily trodden by these reverent pilgrims was worn by the feet of the two friends four centuries ago. Their souls were knit together as the souls of David and Jonathan. Together they laboured; together they were laid to rest at last. In the old Castle Church at Wittenberg—the church on whose door Luther nailed his famous theses—the two reformers sleep in one grave.

Luther and Melancthon had much in common. Among other things, they resembled each other in this respect: each had a text inscribed upon his house. On the house of Martin Luther, you will



see a text from the Old Testament; on the house of Philip Melancthon, you will see a text from the New. In that circumstance there is something singularly characteristic. The words on Philip Melancthon's house are these: *If God be for us who can be against us?* And the words on Luther's? Come with me!

Luther's house is entered by a richly-carved portal. On either side is a stone seat, and, over the seat, a canopy. On the one canopy you see a portrait of Luther; on the other his arms are engraved. Round the arms are the five letters V.I.V.I.T.—He lives! They reflect Luther's exultant faith in the living presence and ultimate triumph of his risen Lord. On the opposite canopy, round the portrait is this text: *In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.* 'Those words,' Luther used to say, 'were an exceeding comfort to me.'

#### IV

One of the most stirring sermons ever preached on this text—Keble's text—Luther's text—has been preached by Mr. Harold Begbie. It is in the form of a novel and is called *Racket and Rest*. The title speaks for itself. Two women figure conspicuously in the book. One of them is the wife of the hero; the other is his mother. The wife represents *racket*; the mother represents *rest*. Dolly, the wife, leaving her husband and child, pursues a hectic career upon



the stage. Her life is one wild flutter of excitement. And, all through the book, the gentle old lady in the background murmurs her message of rest. She prays that, like Ruth, Dolly may '*find rest in the house of her husband.*' 'Every morning and night,' Mr. Begbie says, 'she prayed for the guidance of God. She loved to read of The Great Rest Giver. She found it more and more difficult to understand Dolly. There was no comparison between *Racket* and *Rest*, only a monstrous contrast. Dolly's lack of calm was shocking to the placid soul of this noble old lady who bowed morning and night in thankfulness to the Giver of Rest. But *Rest* conquered *Racket* in the end.

Dolly is suddenly seized with ear trouble. An operation leaves her stone deaf. She returns, chastened by suffering, to her husband's home. His constancy is the wonder of all her days. She finds her child, Dorothea, grown into a tall and graceful girl. Shortly afterwards the old lady lies down to die. Dolly feels that she cannot bear to let the tranquil spirit go without learning the secret of her restful and beautiful life.

'I want very much to hear you speak,' she says, 'but I cannot. You don't know how greatly I long to hear your voice.' She bent and kissed the widow's hand. 'When I could hear you,' she said, 'I would not listen. This is my punishment. But you can hear me, and I want to tell you that I am sorry for all the rude things I ever said to you, and very

sorry for all the unkind things I ever thought about you.' She kissed her hand again.

The widow's eyes were full of the bright light of kindness. Her lips opened, and she said softly: *'In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.'*

'You are speaking, and I cannot hear you,' said Dolly, lifting her trumpet.

The widow stretched out her hands, drew Dolly down to her, and kissed her brow.

'It would be difficult for you to make me hear,' Dolly said, putting away the trumpet. There were tears in her eyes. For the first time in her life, she felt the wisdom of goodness. The death of this beautiful old lady was without tears. Whatever mystery hung behind the dark curtain, it could not affright her. She had lived a good life, her heart was pure, her hands were clean, her eyes were full of sweetness. The end of her life had come. Death was in the room. She was radiant with serenity. Dolly wondered why everybody did not think more often of their death. Death is so certain. Life flies away. It is wise to be good. 'Will you tell Dorothea,' she said, 'when she is alone with you, so that she can tell me afterwards, how you managed in your training of Theodore? You were always kind and loving; but you were also wise and strict. I want to know how you managed. He loved you all through his boyhood, and yet you never spoilt him. You were a perfect mother. I want to be as

like you as I can. Will you tell Dorothea? You have changed me.'

The widow took a pencil and tablet which rested on a table at her side, and wrote the words: '*In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.*' Then she gave the paper to Dolly and smiled into her eyes. Towards the end she called Dorothea to her side.

'You have the secret, my dear,' she said. 'You are calm and restful. You must tell your mother. *In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.*' They are the old lady's last words.

## V

Here, then, framed in three distinct settings, is the text! We have seen it playing its part in the quietest and most tranquil soul that ever adorned a secluded English parsonage. We have seen it taking its place in the life of the stormiest and most rugged soul by whom the world was ever shaken. And we have seen it quoted by Mr. Harold Begbie as the secret of the sweetness, charm and courage of one of his most engaging heroines. What is there in the text to account for three such striking testimonies? The answer is that everything is in the text; everything, that is to say, that matters.

For, after all, there are only two things in life that matter very much. The one is *Salvation*; the other is *Strength*. Half the world is asking: What

must I do to be *saved*? The other half is asking: What must I do to be *strong*? And the text—Keble's text, Luther's text, the little widow's text—answers both questions. What must I do to be *saved*? *In returning and rest shall ye be saved!* There lies the *first* secret.

What must I do to be *strong*? *In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength!* There lies the *second*!

*Strength* always lies in *quietness*. That is why, in the days of our frailty, the doctor orders us away into the solitudes. The strong men, Carlyle declares, are invariably the silent men.

*Salvation* always lies in *returning*. We get on by going back. That is why Jesus set a little child in the midst of His disciples and said: *Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven*. That is why Jacob went back to Bethel and renewed his earlier vows. That is why the husband and wife whose felicity has become clouded must, at any cost, recapture the spirit of their courtship: argument is worse than useless. That is why the minister who has lost his vision and his rapture must get back to the emotions with which he was ordained. Back! We must go back! Back to the simplicities! Back to the Cross! Back, like the prodigal, to the Father's heart! It is always in *returning* that a confused soul finds *salvation*.

## XI

### JOHN COLERIDGE PATTESON'S TEXT

#### I

EVERYBODY felt, as they left the solemn old church in the soft and misty sunshine of that autumn afternoon, that the thronged and impressive service that they had just attended was destined to become historic. In that respect, everybody was *right*. But everybody fancied that it would derive its historic importance exclusively from the personality of the preacher. In that respect, everybody was *wrong*. The personality of the preacher was certainly arresting and captivating; but if the worshippers had more closely scrutinized the large congregation they would have noticed a bright-eyed Eton schoolboy standing in the crowded aisle. Little as they might have suspected it, it is about the person of that Eton schoolboy that the historic interest of that memorable service gathers.

It is the last day of October, 1841. The ecclesiastical dignitaries who control the policy of the Church of England have recently resolved upon a forward policy. The Church is to be imperialized. Bishops are to be appointed to evangelize the most remote dependencies of the Empire. The claims of the most distant outpost are to be first considered. It is announced in due course that the Rev. George



Augustus Selwyn, who for several years has held the curacy at the Windsor Parish Church, has been selected as the pioneer Bishop of New Zealand. And, this afternoon, the youthful prelate is preaching his farewell sermon. *The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto Thee; the forces also of the Gentiles shall come unto Thee*—that was the text. As he outlined his ambitions amidst the strange and savage scenes towards which he was turning his face, the people who, to the end of life, cherished every memory of their young minister with a personal and tender regard, leaned forward in strained and breathless silence. He hoped, he said, to establish a vigorous and aggressive church upon those distant shores; and, if he succeeded in that, he would be content to die there, neglected and forgotten.

Did the preacher, I wonder, direct some special and appealing glances at the Eton schoolboy in the aisle? I do not know. I only know that nobody in that great congregation was more profoundly impressed than was he. 'I was forced to stand all the time,' he says, 'but it was most affecting when he talked of going out to found a church and then to die neglected and forgotten. All the people burst out crying, he was so very much beloved by his parishioners. When he finished, I think I never heard anything like the sensation. I felt that, if it had not been so sacred a spot, all would have exclaimed "God bless him."'

The schoolboy—one of the most brilliant scholars at Eton and the popular captain of the school eleven—was John Coleridge Patteson. The impress of that service remained upon his spirit to his dying day. He walked out of the church that afternoon with but one dream, one ideal, one ambition. He, too, must tell earth's scattered islands of the Saviour! The young bishop suspected the tumult that he had awakened in the young boy's brain. 'Lady Patteson,' he said, a day or two later, when he called to say good-bye, 'I want you one of these days to give me Coley!' Quite independently, Coley himself crept to his mother's side and begged that he might one day be permitted to join Bishop Selwyn on the other side of the world. Lady Patteson promised that, if he held resolutely to his purpose, she and Sir John would send him forth with their blessing. Fifteen years later, when Bishop Selwyn visited England, the promise was fulfilled. And thus Dr. Selwyn had the unique experience of attracting himself to his colleague and successor before he himself had left his native land for those romantic scenes amidst which his subsequent years were spent.

## II

But perhaps I ought to have begun at the beginning. For, notable as was that service at the Windsor Parish Church, it merely pointed out to the Eton schoolboy the particular sphere in which he could best use his cultured mind and conspicuous

gifts. Long before that, under the beautiful influences of his father and his mother, his heart had been captivated by the sweetness of the gospel story, and he had longed to devote his life to the proclamation of the Saviour's love. 'I should dearly like to be a clergyman,' he used to tell his mother, 'because I think that the saying of the Absolution must make people very happy!' On his fifth birthday, since he had made marked progress in learning to read, his father presented him with a Bible. 'Oh, my dear, dear Father,' he writes from New Zealand, twenty-seven years later, a few hours after his public consecration as Bishop of Melanesia, 'God will bless you for all your love to me, and for your love to Him in giving me to His service. The Bible used to-day at the crowded and solemn consecration was the Bible that you gave me on my fifth birthday.' He began to read as soon as he received it, and one passage—always a favourite with him—profoundly moved him even then. 'If ever I become a preacher,' he used to say, 'I shall preach on the fifty-third of Isaiah!'

*Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.*

*But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.*

*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have*

*turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*

That was his faith. It was a faith that was so robust that all the schoolboys at Eton admired his courage, feared his frown, and cherished a profound respect for his convictions. And *that* was his message. It was the keynote of his entire ministry. The passage that charmed his heart as a child he afterwards translated into many tongues and repeated to many peoples. It was his solace to the very end. In the story of that last tragic voyage, I catch a glimpse of him, sitting in his cabin, his Hebrew Bible and Delitzsch's commentary spread out before him, scrutinizing once more the words in which he had found such deathless treasure. The thought embedded in those priceless sentences was the thought that was always uppermost in his mind.

*All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*

The verse begins and ends with *all*, and thus completes its circuit. John Coleridge Patteson felt the intense significance of those two *all's*. *All* men—ancient and modern, savage and scholarly, black and white—*have gone astray*: therein they are all alike. *They have turned every one to his own way*: therein they differ. How could he point them all, all, *all* to Him on whom the separate and distinctive iniquities of them *all* had been laid? That, from the days of his happy childhood to the day of his sudden mar-

tyrdom, was the master-passion of his life. The two *all's* of the fifty-third of Isaiah sank into his soul. In the light of those *all's*, all men were alike to him. 'It did not matter whether it was a black man or a white one who came to him,' said one of his native converts after his death, 'he loved them all alike.' Nobody can thoroughly understand and appreciate John Coleridge Patteson unless he has learned to understand and appreciate the golden passage which he made his watchword. In a remarkable way, the fifty-third of Isaiah expresses the spirit of his life. Let me give a single illustration.

## III

It was his gentleness that made him great. He disarmed the wildest men by trusting them. His schooner drops anchor off some coral reef in the Pacific. The shore is crowded with excited natives brandishing their spears. They have never seen a white man before and do not know what to make of the strange apparition. Mr. Patteson plunges into the sea, strikes out for the reef, and stands, smiling and defenceless, among them. Or, the ship having been brought to anchor in a lagoon, the astonished natives surround it in their canoes. Mr. Patteson at once clambers down into one of the canoes and places himself at their mercy. In the course of one voyage he landed over seventy times amidst crowds of natives, naked and armed; yet never once was a hand raised against him.



'Savages!' he used to say, 'there are no savages! Approach them in the right way, treat them with confidence, assume the existence in them of ordinary human instincts, and you'll find nothing savage about them! Why, the fellows on the reef, who have never seen a white man, will wade back to the boat and catch one's arm to prevent one falling into pits among the coral, just like an old nurse looking after her child!'

Some people would have charged those untutored blacks with ferocity. Mr. Patteson knew better; and it was his text that taught him better. *All we like sheep have gone astray*. It is the most charitable construction that can possibly be put upon human wrongdoing. It is a crepuscular anticipation of that great cry from the Cross: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!* The fifty-third of Isaiah does not attribute to man the ferocity of the tiger, nor the venom of the serpent, nor the cunning of the fox, but the stupidity of the sheep. 'Mr. R. Rowley, of Shrewsbury, told me,' says Richard Baxter, in his *Call to the Unconverted*, 'that he saw a strange sight on one of the bridges over the Severn. A man was driving a flock of fat lambs, and, something meeting and startling them, one of the lambs jumped upon the wall of the bridge, slipped, and fell into the stream. The rest, seeing him, followed; and all, or almost all, were drowned.'

*All we like sheep have gone astray*, says Isaiah.

*They know not what they do*, says the Saviour.

Bishop Patteson would never accuse the islanders of anything worse than that. 'Savages!' he exclaimed contemptuously; 'I'd like to see anyone call my Bauro boys *savages*!' Like the prophet, and like the Saviour, he felt that he was dealing, not with *wolves*, but with *sheep*. They had gone astray, that was all.

## IV

But even sheep do not model their wanderings on a fixed and regular pattern. There is initiative and individuality in their waywardness. *We have turned each one to his own way*. The ancients transgressed in one way; the moderns offend in another. Civilization has its polished sins; barbarism has its crude ones. The white man and the black man have turned each to *his own way*; and Jehovah hath laid upon a common Saviour the iniquities of them *all*. That being so, Bishop Patteson felt that the black man ought to know of it, as well as the white. The white man had a multitude of teachers; but who had ever visited the cannibal islands of the South Seas to tell the tribesmen the story of the Cross?

It was my own privilege the other day to address a large gathering of ministers. When I resumed my seat, the chairman suggested that, instead of passing a formal vote of thanks to me, those present should endeavour to interest me in return. He invited any man who had ever enjoyed any particularly striking experience to relate it for my benefit.

A highly-esteemed minister, the Rev. C. Torrington, rose and told of the pitiable distress that enfolded him when first he realized his need of salvation. 'For three months,' he said, 'I walked in darkness. Then, one day, as I strolled along a country lane, I casually and thoughtlessly stooped to pick up a torn piece of newspaper that was blowing hither and thither. I glanced at it and read: *He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.* The familiar passage came to me that day radiant with new light, and I entered into rest. The words were like a diamond flash.'

*Wounded for our transgressions*—the white man had always said it. But why should not the black man say it too?

*With His stripes we are healed*—why should not the islanders be helped to make that glad confession?

For fifteen years Bishop Patteson sailed from island to island about those sunlit seas. His system was simplicity itself. Having won the confidence of the people, he induced them to confide to his care one or two of the most intelligent young people on the island. These he carried away to his colleges at Auckland or Norfolk Island; and then, having evangelized and educated them, he restored them to their island homes to evangelize their own people.

## V

The fifty-third of Isaiah is a song of sacrifice. *He was wounded. . . . He was bruised. . . . He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter.* In the spirit of that sacrificial chapter, John Coleridge Patteson lived and laboured; in the spirit of that sacrificial chapter he laid down his life at the last. He was only forty-four. But by this time the slave-trader was at work in the South Seas. One unscrupulous trafficker, admiring the ingenuity of Bishop Patteson's methods, determined to turn them to his own account. He made his ship look as much like the Bishop's schooner as possible, and sailed for Nukapu, an island lying between the New Hebrides and the Solomon Islands. He went ashore in a white robe, to impersonate the Bishop, and, after some blasphemous buffoonery, invited five of the islanders on board. In all innocence, they followed him. They were shown down into the hold, where some of the crew were making a pretence of conducting church service. The islanders, not suspecting a trap, were lured below. The hatches were promptly put on and battened down, and the ship sailed away with her victims. When the natives ashore realized what had happened, they swore that they would have blood for blood. They would wreak their vengeance on the Bishop when he again appeared. They did.

A few days later, on September 20, 1871, the

Bishop himself reached Nukapu. It is but a palm-covered fleck of sand—blue waves breaking over coral reefs. Four canoes came off from the shore. Those on the ship fancied that they noticed something sullen and menacing about the attitude of the natives; but the Bishop, who never showed suspicion, sprang into one of the canoes as usual. Away they went, and the crew of the vessel anxiously awaited the Bishop's return. Later on, two canoes pushed off from the shore. A couple of women occupied one of them; the other appeared to be empty. When near the ship, the women pushed the empty canoe towards it and then paddled back to the shore. It was *not* empty. In the bottom of it lay something covered with a native mat. Reverent hands lifted the mat, and there, beneath it, was the body of the Bishop! It bore five dreadful wounds; and on the breast was a palm branch in which five knots had been tied. On the face was the old familiar smile, sweet, brave, and calm as ever. The five wounds and the five knots were intended to represent the five men whom he was supposed to have stolen.

*He was wounded*—says the fifty-third of Isaiah.

*He was bruised*—that favourite passage of his goes on to say.

*'His life was here taken by men for whose sake he would willingly have given it'*—says the monument that now marks the spot where he was murdered.

Like his Lord, he had died at the hands of those



whom he sought to save! He had laid down his life for those who took it! He had entered into the fellowship of his Lord's sufferings! Put to death as a malefactor! Five bleeding wounds! Branches of palm trees! The last rites rendered by women who trusted him still! The very name of the group of islands was Santa Cruz—the Holy Cross! In a very singular and striking way, John Coleridge Patteson was identified in his death with Him who was *wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities*; and his lifelong affection for the fifty-third of Isaiah suggests that he himself would have coveted no death more sublime.

## XII

### ENOCH STAPLETON'S TEXT

#### I

THE gently undulating Sussex downs—their green slopes flecked by white sheep and their golden corn-fields splashed by scarlet poppies—seemed farther than the farthest star to poor Hannah Stapleton as she sat watching her young husband building, in the depths of the great Virginian woods, the log cabin that was to be their first real home. Before her, an extensive clearing stretched away to the blue foothills whilst behind her and around her was the virgin forest. She shuddered whenever she glanced at it. Leaving the dear old English home—the home of her childhood—the ocean had seemed terrible enough; but, in comparison with the forest, the ocean was nothing. As, day after day, the immigrants—twenty-three in number—had tramped behind their guides through these gloomy woods, the loneliness and the magnitude of it all had sent a chill to her very heart. The vastness and the strangeness of the forest seemed to crush her spirit. She saw the maple and the walnut, the hickory and the basswood mingling with the gorgeous tints of the rhododendron and the flaming hues of the azalea, Coppices and brilliant shrubs sprang up around the giant trees, whilst the loftiest branches above her

were matted into one dense tangle by the wanton grape-vine whose coils swayed in the breeze like the loose shrouds of the ship she had so lately left. The mountains, too; would she ever forget that long climb over the Alleghanies with their abrupt precipices, their steep declivities, and their thickly-wooded slopes? All through the journey, wild, furry things of which she had only read in picture-books, startled her as they swung from bough to bough, prowled about in the distance, or scurried swiftly across the path. The deer, of which she caught fitful glances, reminded her of home, but she wished that, instead of the mocking-bird, the whip-poor-will and the night-hawk, she could hear once more the thrush, the blackbird, and the nightingale. Every few days, in the course of that interminable pilgrimage, they came upon some quaint little settlement. There was a court-house, a roomy and odorous store, a cluster of cabins, a meeting-house, and, sometimes, an inn. Outside one court-house, Hannah saw a pillory, a whipping-post, and the stocks. Knots of men lounged about—laughing, talking, effecting exchanges, and driving bargains. These were dealers, trappers, Quakers, negroes, officers, slave-dealers and, now and then, a group of Indians. Hannah felt an instinctive dread of the red men and listened with horror to the stories of the ravages that they had recently wrought.

But all things come to an end; Enoch and Hannah reached their destination at last. To Hannah's

delight she found that none of the new arrivals were to be very far from each other. She had formed some fast friendships on the ship and in the woods; it would seem like a link with the old land to meet her fellow travellers from time to time. Dotted among the newcomers were several homes established by earlier settlers; the depredations of the Indians made it imperative that settlements should be as close as possible. The place was called Newhampstead; it was not very far from the waters of the Ohio; and was, therefore, one of the most westerly outposts of the new civilization.

And now, on this sunny morning, whilst Enoch proceeds with the erection of their home, Hannah leaves her own work for a few moments and comes out to watch him. A book rests on her knee. Enoch, who has been toiling since daylight, lays down his saw and comes across to her. He recognizes the book as the Bible that his father and mother had given him the night before they sailed. As he stands near her, she opens the volume casually, almost absent-mindedly. It falls open at a place in which a book-mark rests; and, on the left-hand page, a text is underlined and marked with a cross. The words are these: *Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding: in all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths.*

'Who marked it?' Hannah enquires. He takes a seat on the rough timber beside her.

'I marked it, little woman,' he says. 'I took that for my text nearly a year ago, and, the very next day, I received the letter from Uncle Reuben offering me a passage to America on the *Queen o' the West*. Somehow, I felt then, and I feel now, that the text had something to do with it. I made up my mind that Sunday night to *trust in the Lord with all my heart*, and it seemed to me, when the letter came, that *He was directing my path*. That's why I marked the text in the new Bible as soon as father gave it to me. And that's why I feel so sure that it will be all right with us; you needn't worry, old lady: we'll just help each other to *trust with all our hearts*, and you'll find that we shall be well looked after.'

It seemed easy, Hannah thought, for Enoch to talk like that. He was always so strong and so sure and so untroubled. But, somehow, *her* heart was in a constant flutter. The loneliness of the new life was so terrible, and its perils so constant, and England seemed such an eternity away, that she found it impossible to be as placid, as calm and as hopeful as Enoch. But she noticed that when, before retiring at night, they read together a few verses from the new Bible, the third chapter of Proverbs—the chapter with the marked passage—was chosen more frequently than any other; and she found a growing pleasure in hearing Enoch read, in his deep, grave accents, the verses in which his soul delighted. *Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not*



*unto thine own understanding: in all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths.* Enoch seemed to rest with unwavering confidence on the dependability of that promise. It was a secret satisfaction to her that, whilst her own heart was palpitating with a constant dread, Enoch's soul was so serene. Then, little by little, she found herself infected by his tranquillity; she, too, became less timid and more trustful; faith took the place of fear; and she surprised herself by singing in odd moments the hymns that she had sung so lightly as a girl. She learned from Enoch to *trust in the Lord with all her heart*, and she slowly came to feel that, with perfect wisdom and perfect love, *He would direct their path* in this strange wilderness.

## II

Hannah's case is by no means an isolated one. Enoch Stapleton's text has often been the instrument by which one man's soul has been infected by another man's faith. Enoch Stapleton's text was General Gordon's text. He quoted it constantly as the source of all his strength and confidence. He had it framed and hung in his room in such a position that the words would greet him as soon as he opened his eyes every morning. In his early journalistic days, Mr. W. T. Stead visited Gordon at Rockstone Place, Southampton, and was deeply impressed by the text upon the wall. 'Before I entered my 'teens,' Mr. Stead says, 'those words were em-

bedded upon my memory,' but the testimony of General Gordon to their efficacy and value powerfully affected him. He enthroned them in his heart with new and regal authority. 'I have them now,' he said, towards the close of his life. 'I have them now, worked into the panels of my office sanctum in Mowbray House. Probably these verses are largely answerable for my lack of confidence in my capacity to steer my own course: *Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding: in all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.* In the atmosphere of the verses I have spent my life, so far as it is spent; and the system upon which I hope to spend the years that remain will be dominated by its influence. In that faith I have lived; in that faith I expect to die.'

And thus, through the agency of the text, an eminent journalist was infected by the faith of a distinguished soldier, just as, a hundred years earlier, Hannah Stapleton had been infected by the faith of her husband.

### III

For it was in 1746 that Enoch and Hannah Stapleton built their home on the edge of the woods not far from the Ohio border. For ten years all went well with them; they prospered abundantly; the farm was a veritable garden in the wilderness; and, to their unbounded delight, four little children

came to share and multiply their happiness. The letters that Hannah wrote to the old home in the Sussex lane are expressive of a deep and joyous content. In one of them she refers to the text. 'It's wonderful how it has all worked out,' she says. 'You can see things more clearly as you look back. We *trusted in the Lord with all our hearts*, and there is no doubt that *He has directed our steps*. We often talk about the verses that Enoch marked in his Bible before he left home.' This letter is dated February 16, 1756; and, by that time, although Hannah did not realize their portentous significance, clouds were beginning to gather.

It was in May, 1756, that war between England and France was actually declared—the war that, culminating three years later in Wolfe's dramatic victory at Quebec, led to the transfer of Canada to the British. But, for some time, all the elements that made for discord had been smouldering. English and French had done everything in their power to poison the minds of the Indians against each other. Several times, reports had reached Newhampstead of Indian raids on settlements at no great distance; farms had been set on fire; forts and court-houses had been destroyed; the scalping-knife had done its dreadful work. In common with all the settlers at Newhampstead, Enoch had made every preparation to defend his home in the event of an attack. At times, Hannah's heart was filled with foreboding as she heard of the havoc wrought

so near at hand and as she watched the precautions that Enoch was taking to guard against the Indians. In many of the villages, even the houses of worship were transformed into watch-towers, and, from the turrets by which they were surrounded, a constant vigil was kept.

‘The meeting-house,’ [so runs one record of the period] ‘was solid mayde to withstand ye wicked onslaughts of ye Red Skins. Its foundations was laide in ye feare of ye Lord, but its Walls was truly laide in ye feare of ye Indians, for many and grate was ye Terrors of em. Alle ye able-bodied Men did work thereat, and ye olde and feeble did watch in towers to espie if any Savages was in hidinge neare, and every Man kept his Musket right to his hande.’

But, although Newhampstead was constantly startled by tidings of dreadful happenings not far away, and although the little community was again and again dismayed and excited by false alarms, its peace and prosperity remained unbroken. It seemed to live a charmed life. And, whenever its immunity was mentioned, Hannah and Enoch glanced meaningly at each other. For, with the passage of the years, they had come to connect their safety with the promise of the text. They had *trusted in the Lord with all their hearts and their path had been directed* and protected. Hannah little dreamed that a time was coming when she would not be able to bear the mention of the words in her hearing.

IV

With the conquest of Canada, the war came to an end. The victory of the British was so complete that all men—on both sides of the Atlantic—hoped for a stable and enduring peace. During the war, white men had fought against white men; Indians instigated by white men on either side, had mercilessly attacked white men on the other side; and, stranger still, the red men, espousing opposite causes, had fought with characteristic ferocity against each other. But now the white men, who had caused all the trouble, had clasped hands; and it was hoped that the Indians would bury the hatchet at the same time. But an unexpected danger arose.

The Indians were alarmed at the absolute authority that England now exercised in the land that, by every right, belonged to the red men. Tribes that had fought against each other during the war, called one another to conference. The Iroquois and the Miamis joined with the Shawnees and the Delawares in urging a united onslaught on the English settlements. 'We must destroy the English,' cried Red Hawk, 'or the English will destroy us! Let us drive them back beyond the Alleghanies!' In Pontiac of the Ottawas, the powerful chief of the vast North-West, they found a leader who was as deep in counsel and astute in strategy as he was masterful in authority and fearless upon the war-path. Under his command, they formed a great



confederacy of insurgent nations to assert their own right to the forests of the West and to drive the white men out of the land. They organized a comprehensive plan of campaign and lost no time in carrying it into execution. The sky became lurid with the glare of burning blockhouses.

‘Nor,’ says the record, ‘was it the garrisoned stockades alone that encountered the fury of the savages. They roamed the wilderness, massacring all whom they met. They struck down the trader in the wood, scalping him on the instant and horribly mutilating his body. They prowled round the cabins of the husbandmen on the frontier; their tomahawks struck alike the labourer in the field and the child in the cradle. Hannah heard one afternoon a piercing scream at the back of the house. Early that morning Enoch had taken Seth, their second-born, away to the woods. ‘I thought,’ cried Hannah, starting up in horror, ‘I thought that the children were with Mary in the *front*!’ They were. The scream at the *back* was merely a device to cover the confusion in the *front* and to focus attention upon the wrong quarter. Whilst Hannah was frantically searching the yard and outbuildings at the back, the red men were vanishing in the opposite direction with Mary and the two little ones as prisoners.

It was during the dark and lonely months that followed—months that Hannah could never afterwards recall without a tear—that she refused to

listen to the text. It had failed her! She had *trusted in the Lord with all her heart* and her home had been left unto her desolate. Often she started up in the night crying 'Mary!' or 'John!' or 'Ruth!' Her poor husband did his best to soothe her distress and restore to her empty soul the boon of faith; but Hannah's heart was breaking.

v

Meanwhile, the settlers felt that the position had become intolerable. No home was secure. They met in conference and resolved to form a great yeoman army to sweep the forests, bring the Indians to their knees, and compel them, as far as possible, to restore their captives. Each State contributed its quota; even the peace-loving Quaker-bred Pennsylvanians sent a thousand men. The strange expedition set out. Mothers and sisters accompanied it in the fond hope of finding in the wigwams the children who had been ruthlessly torn from their arms. Hannah insisted upon being of the number. The campaign ended in scenes that Bancroft describes as the loveliest that the American forests ever witnessed. Here is one! Beneath a bower erected on the green river-bank, the great chiefs and warriors of the Senecas, the Delawares and the Shawnees sue for peace. They lead in a long string of captives. Thousands of eager eyes scrutinize each face as it appears; there are a few cries of delight; and, when the procession ends, there are many tears

of disappointment. But the chiefs throw down a huge bundle of sticks. Each stick represents, they explain, a captive whom they undertake to return within a day or two. They kept their word. 'The arrival of the prisoners,' says Bancroft, in the passage to which I have just referred; 'the arrival of the prisoners formed the loveliest scene ever enacted in the wilderness. Mothers recognized their lost babes; sisters and brothers scarcely able to recover the accents of their native tongue, discovered with surprise that they were children of the same parents.' Nor did the joy end there. 'For,' says the historian, 'humanity abounds with strange affections. Whom the Indians spared, they loved! They had not taken the little ones into their wigwams without receiving them into their hearts. To part with them was anguish to the red men: they shed torrents of tears.' They begged that, in the days to come, they might visit those who had become so dear to them. They came from day to day to the homes that they had once ravaged, bringing gifts of corn and skins. The red men and the white men became attached to each other by ties that they had never before known.

It was during those days that Hannah wept over her own faithlessness.

'Enoch,' she said one Sunday night, as, arm-in-arm, they walked back from the meeting-house that no longer needed towers and turrets to the home in which, with perfect composure, they could leave unguarded the treasures that had been so wonderfully

restored to them, 'Enoch, I see now that I never did as the text commands, and never, therefore, deserved the peace that it promises. It says, *Trust in the Lord with all thine heart*; you alone did that, Enoch. I never trusted *with all my heart*. I trusted a little, and enjoyed a little peace. But, Enoch,' she added, leaning more heavily upon his arm, 'it was you who taught me to trust a little: you must teach me now to trust *with all my heart*.' And although he smiled, pressed her hand between his elbow and his side, and said that *he* had nothing to teach *her*, she felt that in his comradeship they would slowly learn the lesson of the larger trust.

## XIII

### RICHARD BAXTER'S TEXT

#### I

IN the noble statue that has been erected to Richard Baxter at Kidderminster—the scene of his most splendid and enduring triumphs—the preacher's up-raised hand is pointing to the skies. In that mute gesture there is a subtle touch of spiritual genius. For Richard Baxter is the most compelling and most victorious evangelist that England has ever produced. 'It is,' as Dr. Alexander Grosart points out, 'no exaggeration to affirm that this one man drew more hearts to the great Broken Heart than any single Englishman of any age.' The secret lies upon the surface. Baxter was tremendously and desperately in earnest; and such ardent souls carry at their girdle a golden key that unlocks all our hearts. To this day, nobody can turn the pages of his books, glance casually at his portrait, or even gaze upon his statue, without feeling the seraphic intensity of his passion. Across a chasm of three hundred years we catch the glow of his hot heart. We find it difficult to realize that we never actually saw the tall and slender frame with which we are so familiar—the tall and slender frame that always



seemed too frail a casket for the restless and fiery spirit that dominated it. Dr. Charles Stanford used to say that, whenever his eyes turned to the portrait of Richard Baxter, the face seemed to flicker into life, and he found himself overwhelmed by a singular tenderness, by an unwonted sensitiveness and by all kinds of delicate emotions. We have each been conscious of some such sensations as we have looked into that grave and thoughtful face with its dark and pleading eyes. And the feeling has made it easier for us to appreciate the resistless appeal that Baxter must have made to those who, actually listening to his full, rich voice, and actually looking into those flashing, penetrating eyes, capitulated unconditionally to the charm of his smile, the gentleness of his humour, the cogency of his reasoning, and the force of his tense and virile personality. He was, says Dr. Grosart, the most earnest man in England. What made him so? That is the question.

## II

And the answer to that question is that the fires of his fervour were lit by a vivid and profound experience of the divine mercy. I catch three glimpses of him—they are only glimpses, for Baxter seldom speaks much about himself—but, though mere flashes, they reveal much.

(1) He is a boy in his 'teens. He has been dangerously ill; and the illness has awakened in his alert mind a score of questions about other worlds. What

is God? Is there a future life? Is the soul immortal? Are the Scriptures true? The boy summons all the resources of his intellect to grapple with these majestic problems. 'He feared the face of no speculative difficulty. Dark as were the shapes which crossed his path, they must be closely questioned; and, gloomy as was the abyss to which they led, it was to be unhesitatingly explored.' He had no friends to help him; his parents were unsympathetic; his pastors and teachers were dissolute and unenlightened; his only hope was in books. A Bible lay on his father's table; and that Bible, as Sir James Stephen says, would have been ill-exchanged for all the treasures of the Vatican. In addition, he managed to scrape together a few other literary curiosities—three particularly. The *first* was a torn and battered volume that somebody had lent to his father. The unalluring tome was the work of a Jesuit named Parsons, though adapted and edited by Bunny, a Puritan. The *second* was *The Bruised Reed*, by Richard Sibbes. The *third* was Perkins' *On Repentance*.

Woodrow, the ecclesiastical historian, tells of an English merchant who visited Scotland, and, on his return to London, was asked the news.

'News?' he replied, 'great news! I went to St. Andrews, where I heard a sweet, majestic-looking man, Blair by name, who showed me the *Majesty of God*. After him I heard a little fair man, Rutherford by name, who showed me the *Loveliness of*

*God.* Then I went to Irvine, where I heard a well-favoured, proper old man, Dixon by name, who showed me *all my heart!*

Bunny, Sibbes and Perkins did for Baxter exactly what Blair, Rutherford and Dixon did for Woodrow's merchant. Bunny showed him the *Majesty of God*; Sibbes showed him the *Loveliness of Christ*; and Perkins showed him *all his heart*. Now see him! A tall, bony youth of fifteen, he strolls with bowed head and folded arms among the wild flowers in the leafy lanes; in an agony of supplication he kneels, until long past midnight, beside the bed that promises his tortured spirit so little repose; and, on Sundays, he bows amidst the cold formalities of the services at his father's church, hoping against hope that he will hear some word to comfort him. And in the fields, in the home and in the sanctuary, he lifts to heaven unceasingly the cry of the publican in the temple: *God be merciful to me, a sinner! God be merciful to me, a sinner!* This is our *first* glimpse of him; now for the *second!*

(2) He is in the full swing of his rich and wonderful ministry. Scrupulously conscientious, he closely examines the motives and the methods that mark his ministerial life. The searching review fills him with shame, and he commits to paper a careful analysis of the blemishes of heart and tongue by which his public life has been disfigured. It is an amazing document. 'Many years ago,' said Dean Stanley, in unveiling the beautiful statue at

Kidderminster, 'many years ago, on one of the few occasions when I had the pleasure of meeting the late Sir James Stephen, he recommended me, with his own peculiar solemnity, to read the last twenty-four pages of the first part of Baxter's *Narrative of his Own Life*. "Lose not a day in reading it," he said; "you will never repent it." That very night I followed his advice, and I have ever since publicly and privately advised every theological student to do the same.' Baxter's classic confession closes with these words: 'I mention all these distempers in order that my faults may be a warning to others. As for myself, they call on me for repentance and watchfulness. Because of the merits and sacrifice and intercession of Christ, *God be merciful to me, a sinner*, and forgive my known and unknown sins!' This is our *second* glimpse of him. There is yet one more.

(3) He is on his death bed. 'Never,' says Dr. Orme, his biographer, 'never was contrite sinner more humble, never was a sincere penitent more calm and comfortable. He acknowledged himself to be the vilest worm that ever went to heaven. Many times he prayed, *God be merciful to me, a sinner!* and blessed God that this was left upon record in the gospel as an effectual prayer. All his hopes, he said, were based on the free mercy of God in Christ. Once, after a short slumber, he awoke and said: *I shall rest from my labours*. A minister who was present finished the quotation: *and your works*

*will follow you.* 'No,' he replied from the bed, 'no works; I will leave out works!' When a friend was comforting him with the remembrance of the good that he had done by his voluminous writings, he exclaimed: 'The good that *I* have done! I was but a pen in God's hand; and what praise is due to a pen?'

*God be merciful to me, a sinner!* he moans, as, laying aside his torn but treasured books, he goes out into the solitude of the Shropshire lanes.

*God be merciful to me, a sinner!* he cries, as he brings to a close his critical review of his ministerial life.

*God be merciful to me, a sinner!* he prays, not once, but over and over and over again, as he lies on his death-bed at the last.

*God be merciful to me, a sinner!* Luke has told us that it was the cry of the publican in the temple; Dr. Stoughton has told us that it was William Wilberforce's text; Ian Maclaren has told us that it was Dr. Maclure's text; Charlotte Brontë has made it Lucy Snowe's text; and, most certainly, it was Richard Baxter's.

### III

It was a profound recognition of the greatness of the divine mercy to him, a sinner, that drove him into the ministry. His father's ambition was that he should become a courtier; and, at the age of eighteen, he set out for Whitehall with a letter of introduction to Sir Henry Herbert, the master of



the revels. A month at the court of Charles the First sufficed to fill him with disgust; and, at Christmas-time, he set out for home. That winter was a phenomenal one. England was Arctic; the roads were buried deep in frozen snow. Riding back to Shropshire, Baxter met a loaded wagon; and, to make room for it, spurred his horse up the bank. The horse slipped; the girths broke; and Baxter was thrown immediately under the wheel. When the wheel was all but touching him, the horses unaccountably stopped. His miraculous escape powerfully impressed his mind, and he felt that his life, so marvellously preserved, should be devoted to some high end. His thoughts swung back to the ministry. Soon after his arrival at the old home, his mother died; and the emotions awakened by her death deepened the impression.

*God be merciful to me, a sinner!* he had cried; and his cry had been heard and answered in many wonderful ways. Ought he not to live to tell of that mercy to others? Ought he not to seek, above everything else, the eternal salvation of his fellow-men? 'The dominant motive of his ministry,' Dean Boyle declares, 'was to be a preacher intent on saving the souls of men.' The winning of a soul was to him what the winning of a race is to an athlete; what the winning of a battle is to a soldier; what the winning of a scholarship is to a student; what the winning of his bride is to a lover. He literally ached for souls.

## IV

The time would fail me to tell of his effective labours amidst the horrors of the plague of London; of his faithful and fearless ministries on the battlefields of the Civil War; of his colossal literary output, extending to nearly two hundred volumes; of his enthusiasm for the evangelization of the North American Indians; of the barbaric treatment to which he was subjected by the infamous Judge Jeffries; and of the languishing imprisonments and cruel persecutions which he so bravely and unflinchingly endured for conscience' sake. He knew his own mind; he interpreted in uttermost simplicity the dictates of his own heart and conscience; he never tampered with his oracle and never sold the truth to serve the hour. In days when it was considered correct to change one's coat to meet the exigencies of fluctuating ideas and changing opinions, he stood as firm as a rock. He could not be bribed by the royal offer of a bishopric, nor browbeaten by the social ostracism of the Five Mile Act. The promise of a pension could not coax him, and the prisons of Clerkenwell could not cow him into servile submission. Even when every limb was enfeebled by disease and racked with pain, he courted dungeons and scaffolds rather than shock the faith of his followers by retracting or amending a single sentence which he had written. No man of his time, with the possible exception of John Bunyan,

has exerted a more practical or permanent influence on the life of subsequent generations.

## V

To see him at his best, however, he must be seen at Kidderminster. He was twenty-six when he commenced his beautiful and historic ministry in that town, and the fragrant record of his labours there will be treasured and studied by ministers as long as the language lasts. The story of Baxter's nineteen years at Kidderminster is one of the choicest idylls in the stately romance of the Church. In his preaching, as the younger Calamy put it, 'he talked about another world like one who had been there and was come as an express from thence to make a report concerning it.' Or, in the words of his own couplet—a couplet which seemed to De Quincey to be 'absolutely sublime, equally for weight and for splendour like molten gold'—he

. . . . preached as never sure to preach again  
And as a dying man to dying men.

During the week he exhausted all his energy and time—though never free from pain—in trying to save the souls of his people one by one. He gathered them in groups; he formed them into classes; he dealt with them family by family; he appealed—earnestly, pleadingly, yearningly—to each individual alone. He felt concerning Kidderminster, as Rutherford felt concerning Anwoth, that every soul won doubled his own everlasting felicity.

My heaven will be two heavens,  
In Immanuel's Land.

He even infected his converts with his own consuming passion. 'For,' he says, 'they thirsted day and night after the salvation of their neighbours'; and thus the fire spread from heart to heart and hearth to hearth. As Dean Boyle observes, the Church possesses no picture of pastoral life so artless and buoyant as this priceless, touching record.

'And now,' says Baxter himself, 'and now, to the praise of my gracious Master, let me acquaint you with something of my success. The Church became so full on the Lord's Day that we had to build galleries to contain all the people. Our week-day meetings also were always full. On the Lord's Day all disorder became quite banished out of the town. As you passed along the streets on a Sabbath morning you might hear a hundred households singing psalms at their family worship. In a word, when I came to Kidderminster there was about one family in a whole street that worshipped God and called upon His name, and when I left there were some streets where there was not one family who did not do so. And, although we had six hundred communicants, there were not twelve of whom I had not perfect confidence in their salvation.'

## VI

All this is but the exemplification of a stupendous principle—the principle on which Baxter's

heroic life was based. He held that everything that flowed *into* his life should, in still greater volume, flow *out* of it again. The living water should be in him, a spring of water, welling up into everlasting life. He never, for example, forgot those three books—the books that showed him the *Majesty of God*, the *Loveliness of Christ*, and *his own heart*. ‘The use that God made of *books*, above *ministers*, to the benefit of my soul, made me,’ he says, ‘some-what excessively in love with good books.’ As long as he lived, therefore, he distributed books in the homes that he visited, and wrote as many books as he could. His *Saints’ Everlasting Rest*, his *Call to the Unconverted*, and his *Reformed Pastor*, are the heritage of all the ages and have been translated into a score of languages. ‘Which,’ asked Boswell, ‘which of Baxter’s books should a man read?’ ‘Read any of them,’ replied Dr. Johnson, ‘they are all good!’

*God be merciful to me, a sinner!* he cried. And, in reply, the mercy of the Most High, rich and full and free, was abundantly ministered to him. From that hour he felt that he must lose no opportunity of leading others to that overflowing fountain of mercy and grace. It was his lifelong task, and even death could not interrupt it. ‘His tall, commanding figure,’ said Dean Stanley, pointing to the statue at Kidderminster, ‘his tall, commanding figure, and his gaunt features are, by the art of the sculptor, still to be seen amongst us. His uplifted hand calls to



the unconverted of this century, as it called to the unconverted of the seventeenth century, to *turn and live.*'

To *turn and live!* 'I charge thee,' cried Baxter, in 1657, 'I charge thee to hear and obey the call of God, and *turn* that thou mayest *live*. But, if thou wilt not, I summon thee to answer it before the Lord, and I require thee there to bear me witness that I gave thee warning, and that thou wast not condemned for want of a call to *turn and live*, but because thou wouldst not believe it and obey it!'

To *turn and live!* That was precisely what the publican did in the temple when he smote upon his breast, cried *God be merciful to me, a sinner*, and went down to his house justified. Like that publican, on whose example he so loved to dwell, Baxter himself had *turned*, and, like him, had entered into the power of an *endless life*. By his imperishable record, by his deathless influence on our history, by his myriads of spiritual descendants, and by monuments like that erected to his memory at Kidderminster, Richard Baxter still lives and moves among us; and no man, even now, is doing more than he to call his fellow-men to repentance and to life everlasting.

## XIV

### TOKICHI ISHII'S TEXT

#### I

THE spiritual pilgrimage of Tokichi Ishii is, Dr. Kelman declares, the strangest story in all the world. It is, he adds, one of our great religious classics. 'There is in it something of the glamour of the *Arabian Nights* and something of the hellish nakedness of Poe's *Tales of Mystery and Horror*. There is also the most realistic vision I have ever seen of Jesus Christ finding one of the lost. You see, as you read, the matchless tenderness of His eyes and the almighty power of the gentlest hands that ever drew a lost soul out of misery into peace.'

The story was first told in the saloon of the *Empress of Russia*. The cold winds swept across the sea, having a touch of the northern ice in them, and a group of passengers had gathered in a sheltered spot. They were relating to each other all kinds of experiences with which they had met. But, after a while, every narrative was overshadowed and driven into the oblivion of forgetfulness by the story that was told by Miss Caroline Macdonald, a quiet little Scottish lady. As soon as she had finished her amazing recital, everybody felt that they

had been listening to one of the world's most thrilling and absorbing romances. It is, as Mr. Fujiya Suzuki, M.P., says, just such a story as Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*. Tokichi Ishii is Jean Valjean over again, but Jean Valjean with a profound spiritual experience. Dr. Kelman, who was of the party on board the *Empress of Russia*, insisted that the story, which had already been published in Japanese, must be translated into Western tongues. And, as a consequence, here it is! It is worthy, as the publishers claim in their introductory note, to be cherished among the classical prison documents which are among the priceless treasures of the Christian Church. It is entitled *A Gentleman in Prison*; and he would be of cold blood and sluggish soul who could read it without deep emotion. Nor is its interest merely—or mainly—sentimental. 'The most striking aspect of the book for many readers will be its psychology.' Dr. Kelman declares, 'One can imagine the glee with which Professor William James would have seized upon it and given it world-wide fame. The narrative discloses a true psychologist, full of curiosity about himself and bewildered by the masterless passions of his amazing soul.' It has, too, a very high apologetic value. If I knew a man who had any doubt about the reality of religion, or about the existence of God, or about the eternal Deity of Jesus Christ, I would rather hand him a copy of *A Gentleman in Prison* than any volume of argument or of divinity

that has ever been published. If *A Gentleman in Prison* did not scatter his scepticism, nothing would.

## II

The book is dedicated *To All in Every Land Who Have Never Had a Chance*. Ishii certainly never had. He was born in heathenism; his father was an inveterate drunkard; his mother was the daughter of a Shinto priest. Up to the time of his death, he only knew two Christians; and he met them during the brief period of his last imprisonment, and after he himself had avowed his faith in Christ. At the age of thirteen he had to decide whether he would steal or starve. He resolved the problem in the way in which most of us, similarly situated, would have settled it. He stole. 'This,' he says, 'was the beginning of my life of crime. As I look back now I realize keenly how easily a child is influenced by bad friends and surroundings.' Stealing quickly led to gambling; gambling led to more stealing; and stealing and gambling together soon plunged him into prison. In prison he consorted with hardened criminals who laid themselves out to make the boy as callous as themselves. 'The fact of the matter is,' says Ishii, and he underlines the words, 'the fact of the matter is that *a prison is simply a school for learning crime*.' He was an apt pupil. During the years that followed, he committed one atrocity after another in the most shame-

less and audacious fashion. He spent most of his time in gaol; and, immediately upon his release, he committed some new felony or murder which once more brought the police upon his trail. And, on the twenty-ninth of April, 1915, his career of crime reached a hideous climax. He murdered the geisha girl who waited upon him at a tea-house near Tokyo. This, the most dastardly and dreadful of all his misdeeds, nevertheless had in it the germ that developed into better things.

## III

Ishii crept away from the tea-house without leaving any clue that could lead to the conviction of the culprit. But, some time afterwards, when he was imprisoned on a later charge, he overheard his fellow-prisoners discussing the tea-house murder. A man named Komori, the lover of the girl, was, they said, being tried for the murder of the geisha. Within the grimy soul of Ishii a knight lay slumbering, and this startling news awoke him. 'For a moment,' Ishii says, 'I could scarcely believe my ears. But upon enquiry I found that the men knew the facts, and that it was actually true that an innocent man—the lover of the dead girl—was on trial for her murder. I began to think. What must be the feeling and the suffering of this innocent Komori? What about his family and relatives? I shuddered to think of the agony that must have been theirs. I kept on thinking; and, at last, I de-



cided to confess my guilt and save the innocent Komori.'

It is this quality in Ishii that led Dr. Kelman to call the book *A Gentleman in Prison*. 'At his worst,' the doctor says, 'he retains the pride and honour of a gentleman; and, in the supreme test, insists on dying to save an innocent man. Cruel as a tiger, he yet responds, like a charming little child, to any kindness shown him. In the midst of a career of systematic and outrageous vice, he sometimes acts in a spirit which many of the elect might envy.' During the days that followed his confession, Ishii laboured ceaselessly to establish Komori's innocence by proving his own guilt. Never in all the calendars of crime did a man work so hard to prove his innocence as Ishii worked to collect evidence that would secure his own conviction. To strengthen his case, he made a clean breast of all his offences; and owned frankly that he was the murderer of several victims whose deaths had been shrouded in impenetrable mystery.

The trial of Ishii for the murder of the geisha girl dragged on for days and months. It was one of the most baffling cases in the criminal records of Japan. At length Ishii was found Not Guilty. 'I was greatly disheartened about this,' he says, 'for I knew that if I were acquitted the innocent Komori would suffer the penalty of the crime. I was so distressed about it that I could not sleep.' He instructed his lawyer to leave no stone unturned in

getting justice done. In accordance with the provisions of Japanese law, he appealed against his acquittal; the case was reheard in the Appeal Court; and Ishii—to his delight—was sentenced to death.

## IV

Like everybody else, Miss Macdonald, who lived in Tokyo, was profoundly interested in the strange case, and determined, if possible, to visit Ishii in prison. 'Early in the morning of New Year's Day,' Ishii says, 'a special meal was brought me instead of the ordinary prison fare; and I was told that two ladies—Miss Macdonald and Miss West—had sent it. Who could these persons be? I had never heard of them before. There was no reason why I should receive anything from people I did not know, and I told the official that I could not accept the gift.' The gaoler induced him, however, to reconsider his proud decision. 'The food was sent to me during the first three days of the New Year. A few days later a New Testament was received from the same source; but I put it on the shelf and did not even look at it.' In the end, however, the monotony of his prison life proved too much for his pride.

'I took the New Testament down from the shelf,' he says, 'and, with no intention of seriously looking at it, I glanced at the beginning and then at the middle. I was casually turning over the pages when I came across a place that looked rather interesting.' It was the passage that tells how Jesus set

His face like a flint to go to Jerusalem, although He knew that it was certain death to do so. The conception appealed to Ishii's sense of daring, of gallantry, of adventure. He laid the book aside, but he resolved to dip into it again. When next he picked it up, it opened by chance at the story of the man who had a hundred sheep, and who, leaving the ninety and nine in the fold, went out into the mountains to search for that which was lost until he found it. Again Ishii was interested, though not quite as deeply as before. But he promised himself that he would give the little book a third trial. He did.

'This time I read how Jesus was handed over to Pilate by His enemies, was tried unjustly and put to death by crucifixion. As I read this I began to think. Even I, hardened criminal that I was, thought it a shame that His enemies should have treated Him in that way. I went on, and my attention was next taken by these words: *And Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* I stopped. I was stabbed to the heart as if pierced by a five-inch nail. What did the verse reveal to me? Shall I call it the love of the heart of Christ? Shall I call it His compassion? I do not know what to call it. I only know that, with an unspeakably grateful heart, I believed. Through that simple sentence I was led into the whole of Christianity.'

On each of the following pages, Ishii harps upon

his text. Every time he repeats it, it seems more wonderful to him. 'The last words that a man utters,' he says, 'come from the depths of his soul; he does not die with a lie upon his lips. Jesus' last words were: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*; and so I cannot but believe that they reveal His true heart.'

'I wish to speak,' he says again later, 'of the greatest favour of all—the power of Christ, which cannot be measured by any of our standards. I have been more than twenty years in prison since I was nineteen years of age, and during that time I have known what it meant to endure suffering. I have passed through all sorts of experiences and have often been urged to repent of my sins. In spite of this, however, I did *not* repent, but, on the contrary, became more and more hardened. And then, by the power of that one word of Christ's, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*, my unspeakably hardened heart was changed, and I repented of all my crimes. Such power is not in man.'

## v

What was it in that dying prayer that so affected Ishii? He was impressed by the possibilities of a cry from the Cross. And, indeed, those possibilities are appalling. Jesus was still the Son of God, and the hands that were nailed to the tree were the creators of both nails and tree. He could have

asked His Father and immediately have received more than twelve legions of angels. When they taunted Him on His inability to save himself, He could have left the Cross in an instant, and, with angelic bands for His escort and heavenly music ringing in His ears, could have returned to His Father, leaving the world to its inevitable doom.

Or, without forsaking the work which He had set Himself to do, He might have called down fire from heaven upon His murderers. He might have cried '*Father, destroy them!*' and withered them where they stood.

Or, without in any way acting inconsistently with His divine nature, He might have cried '*Father, judge them: vengeance is Thine; do Thou repay!*'

But, no! *Father, forgive them, he prays, for they know not what they do.* Did he scan those murderous faces, listen to their oaths and jests, and wonder what plea He could justly urge in extenuation of their awful deed? There was only one thing to be said on their behalf, and He discovered and presented that one plea. So skilful and masterly an Advocate is He who ever liveth to intercede for us! *Forgive them, for they know not what they do!* The plea in that prayer broke the heart of Ishii. It went to his soul, he says, like a five-inch nail.

## VI

The New Testament of Ishii's contains a striking statement which, during his last imprisonment, he



may have noticed and pondered. It is to the effect that he that is in Christ Jesus is *a new creation*. It is the only phrase that can possibly convey an impression of the transformation that overcame Ishii. He became literally and actually, *a new creation in Christ Jesus*. He was made all over again. And, from his point of view, it seemed as if the world about him had been made all over again. 'It was only after I came to prison,' he says, 'that I came to believe that man really has a soul. I will tell you how I came to see this. In the prison yard chrysanthemums have been planted to please the eyes of the inmates. When the season comes, they bear beautiful flowers, but in the winter they are nipped by the frost, and wither. Our outer eye tells us that the flowers are dead, but this is not the real truth. When the season returns the buds sprout once more and the beautiful flowers bloom again. And so I cannot but believe that if God in His mercy does not allow even the flowers to die, there surely is a soul in man which He intends shall live for ever.' Here was fresh vision vouchsafed to the eyes of this *new creation*; and, in keeping with it, there was a new and radiant joy in his heart.

'To-day,' he writes, in that wonderful journal that he kept all through his last imprisonment, 'to-day I am sitting in my cell with no liberty to come and go, and yet I am far more contented than in the days of my freedom. In prison, with only poor coarse food to eat, I am more thankful than I

ever was out in the world when I could get whatever food I wanted. In this narrow cell, nine feet by six, I am happier than if I were living in the largest house I ever saw. The joy of each day is very great. These things are all due to the grace and favour of Jesus.' The Governor of the prison, Mr. Shirosuke Arima, heard of Ishii's extraordinary bearing, and decided to visit him. 'One day,' he tells us, 'I went to see Ishii in his cell and found him sitting bolt upright and looking very serious. My first glance showed him to be a powerfully built fellow, with heavy bushy eyebrows and a large flat nose. I could not help thinking that, if his heart were as rough as his exterior, one would have every right to fear him. But his eyes told a different story. They shone with a quiet beautiful light; his cheeks were clear and healthy looking, and his spirit was brimming over with gentleness. My heart went out to him with a great tenderness.'

Miss Macdonald was Ishii's last visitor. 'We both knew,' she says, 'that it might be the last time. I read to him words that were penned centuries ago; but as I stood there in a tiny cubby-hole, and talked to him across a passage-way and through a wire screen, it seemed impossible to believe that they were not written for the very conditions that we faced there in that Japanese prison-house. "I have finished all my writing," Ishii told me, "and my work is done. I am just waiting now to lay down this body of sin and go to Him." I looked at him and

his eyes were glowing with joy.' He had not long to wait.

'This morning,' wrote the Buddhist chaplain, in sending Miss Macdonald Ishii's journal and effects, 'this morning Tokichi Ishii was executed at Tokyo prison. He faced death rejoicing greatly in the grace of God and with steadiness and quietness of heart. His last request was that you be told of his going, and be thanked for your many kindnesses. He has left his books and his manuscripts to you, and you will receive them at the prison office. His last words, which are in the form of a poem, he asked me to send to you. They are as follows:

My name is defiled,  
My body dies in prison,  
But my soul, purified,  
To-day returns to the City of God!

'Ishii seemed to see nothing but the glory of the heavenly world to which he was going. Among the officials who stood by and saw the clear colour of his face and the courage with which he bore himself, there was no one but involuntarily paid him respect and honour.' The *Gentleman in Prison*, released from the cage of his early conditions, and released from the prison bars that hedged him in in later years, was gloriously free at last!

## XV

### GEORGE FOX'S TEXT

#### I

It was the loneliest-looking grave that I had ever seen, and I could scarcely believe my eyes when I read upon the modest little stone so tremendous and historic a name. Having a quarter of an hour to spare before the time of my next appointment, I was loitering idly in the neighbourhood of Bunhill Fields. Absent-mindedly I turned down Roscoe Street. As I made my way past the dingy warehouses and unalluring stores of that grimy thoroughfare, my eye was suddenly attracted by a little patch of green on my left. Looking through the iron bars, I saw, a few yards back from the roadway, a tennis court; and still nearer to me, a solitary tombstone! And on that simple and obscure stone, I read to my astonishment the name of one who moved the world as the world had seldom or never been moved before! For George Fox was a shoemaker who, with his hammer, beat the ages into shape.

#### II

‘Perhaps,’ says Carlyle, ‘perhaps the most remarkable incident in modern history is not the Diet of Worms, still less the Battle of Austerlitz, Waterloo,

Peterloo, or any other battle; but an incident passed carelessly over by most historians, and treated with some degree of ridicule by others, namely, George Fox's making to himself a suit of leather.' Men saw George Fox sitting among his tanned hides, his paste-horns, his rosin and his well-worn tools; but they did not realize that the little shoe-shop was the Temple of Immensity, holier than any Vatican or Loretto-shrine. Yet, great as was the shoe-shop, the greatest day in its history was the day on which he left it. 'Why,' he asks himself, 'should I be imprisoned here among my straps, my tatters and my tag-rags? What binds me to my bench? The need of money? For shame! Will all the shoe-wages under the moon ferry me to "*that far Land of Light*" for which I sigh? I will to the woods; the hollow of a tree will lodge me, wild berries feed me, and, for clothes, can I not stitch for myself a perennial suit of leather?' And thus, like a navigator pushing out into unknown seas in search of unknown lands, George Fox left everything that was dear to him in order that he might search untrammelled for '*that far Land of Light*' on which his heart was so steadily set. And, in Carlyle's judgment, nothing grander ever happened.

## III

George Fox's leather breeches have captured the imagination of mankind. Those leather breeches, as Macaulay says, were known all over the country;



and Fox has himself told us that the hypocrites and hirelings of England trembled when it was rumoured that the Man in Leather Breeches was coming. Carlyle implies that the fate of nations hung upon the thread with which the young shoemaker sewed together those leather breeches; but we must make some allowance for the fact that, just at that moment, Carlyle was engaged upon a *Philosophy of Clothes*. In the same sentence in which George Fox mentions the *leather suit*, which was to be his new wardrobe, he mentions the *hollow tree* which was to be his new home. Carlyle, busy among the sheets of *Sartor Resartus*, could think of nothing but the *leather suit*; yet, in point of fact, the *hollow tree* is of infinitely greater historic interest. It was whilst hidden in the hollow of that tree that George Fox caught the first glimpse of 'that far Land of Light' for which his spirit had ached so long.

It was a dark age in which to be looking for a *Land of Light*. English standards and English manners were at their lowest ebb. Society was as corrupt as it could well be; music and art were debased; the sports and pastimes of life were universally squalid and usually obscene; even religion was formal, hypocritical and revolting. The clergy were largely ignorant and degraded. 'They grovelled,' Colquhoun says, 'in habits of the coarsest sensuality. They were content to sail with the stream, and a dirty stream it was down which English society was floating.' Into this dense and murky fog the young

shoemaker groped his way in search of '*that far Land of Light*' which, sleeping and waking, haunted his tortured fancy.

In his pitiful distress, he made his way from vicarage to vicarage, begging to be directed into the way of life and peace. One clergyman advised him, if he would escape from his melancholy, to drink beer and dance with the girls. Another urged him to smoke and sing. Poor George shook his head. 'Tobacco,' he says, ruefully, 'was a thing I could not love; and, as to singing, how could *I* sing?' A clergyman made sport of him before the servants; a fourth bade him marry; a fifth flew into a violent passion because, on his way up the garden path, George had inadvertently set his foot upon a flower-bed. A sixth gave him some physic and urged him to go to a surgeon and be bled. He accordingly went and had his arms and forehead lanced in several places; but no blood would flow, 'so dried up was my body with sorrow, griefs, and troubles, which were so great upon me that I could have wished that I had never been born.' For two years he pursued this passionate quest, a blind man among blind guides; and then, just as he was beginning to despair of ever sighting '*that far Land of Light*,' its shining shores broke abruptly on his delighted vision.

## IV

Broken-hearted and bewildered as a result of his disconcerting experiences, George Fox gave up the

preachers and teachers in despair. He suddenly came to the conclusion that, like Columbus scouring the Atlantic in search of India, he was looking for '*that far Land of Light*' in the wrong direction. He had looked *around*; he resolved to look *within* and to look *up*. It flashed upon him that the Kingdom of God is not to be seen on a distant skyline through a mariner's glasses. Had not Jesus himself said that *the Kingdom of God is within you*? Did not the insatiable thirst for light prove that, to some extent at least, the light was already breaking upon him? Is there not grace in the desire for grace? 'Thou would'st not have sought Him,' as Pascal used to say, 'unless thou hadst already found Him.' 'The Lord opened to me by His invisible power,' Fox tells us in his *Journal*, 'that every man is enlightened by the divine light of Christ.' And so the young shoemaker set out to search afresh—in silence, and in solitude. 'I fasted much,' he says, 'and walked abroad in lonely places, and often took my Bible and sat in hollow trees till night came on. And frequently, after dark, I walked mournfully about by myself, for I was a man of sorrows, in the time of the first workings of the Lord in me.'

Christ was not in the hollow tree; yet in the hollow tree George Fox found Him. For the very presence of the young shoemaker in the hollow tree was a pledge of his determination to seek his Lord at any cost. He had discovered that the salvation

of his soul must be a matter of first-hand personal intercourse between himself and his Saviour. He would knock at vicarage doors no more. 'For I saw that there was none among them all that could speak to my condition. And when all my hopes in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me; then, oh, then I heard a voice which said: "There is One, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition." When I heard that, my heart did leap for joy. For the Lord showed me why it was that none upon earth could help me. It was that I might give Him all the glory, and that Jesus Christ might have the pre-eminence, seeing that it is He, and He alone, Who enlightens.' 'This paragraph,' says Henry S. Newman, 'contains within itself the key of Fox's after-life and of the doctrines that he subsequently preached.' That being so, let us examine it a little more closely!

## v

*'I am the Light of the World; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the Light of Life!'*

*'The Light of Life!' 'The Light of Life!'*

*'That far Land of Light!'*

George Fox had searched, passionately and tirelessly, for *'that far Land of Light.'*

He had discovered that *'it is Christ, and Christ alone, Who enlightens!'*

And, all alone in his hollow tree, he had come face to face with Christ!

That profound and mystical experience, as Edward Grubb says, transformed his entire life and invested him with a mission. 'From being a despairing seeker, he became, without any human help, a happy finder; and he was able to bring many others into the same experience. He concluded that the Light from God that had arisen in his own soul was available for every man who would turn to it and obey it: it was not the prerogative of a favoured few.'

That was the keynote of all that followed. His wife has told us how she heard him speak for the first time. It was in the church at Ulverston in Lancashire. When George Fox, then a youth of twenty-eight, entered the building, the congregation were singing the hymn before the sermon. 'When they had finished singing, he stood up upon a seat and desired permission to speak, which was granted. He began to explain how that *Christ was the Light of the World, and lighteth every man that cometh into the world*, and that by this light the people might all come to God. I stood up in my pew and wondered at his doctrine; for I had never heard such before.'

'In all his testimony and ministry,' says William Penn, 'George Fox laboured incessantly to open this one truth to the understanding of the people—that *Christ Jesus is Himself the Light of the World.*'



His own experience of the dawning of that divine Light was so sensational that he felt that he would be recreant to the best impulses of human nature if he failed to communicate to all his fellow-men the revelation that he had himself received. He went everywhere, talking to everyone about *the Light—the Light that shineth in darkness—Christ Jesus, the Light of the World*. ‘His illumination,’ as one of his biographers has said, ‘altered everything for him; it was the Dayspring from on High; it warmed his heart, filled him with joy, and gave him a mission. He itinerated these islands, preaching and protesting as no man had ever done before. He wore out his clothes, his horse, his critics, his persecutors, and, eventually, himself. In strange places and at all times he bore his testimony to all classes of persons, from the Lord Protector to the kitchen-maid, and from the judge to the convicted thief. He was every man’s chaplain; he was a universal evangelist.’ ‘Nothing,’ says Bancroft, in his *History of the United States*, ‘nothing could daunt his enthusiasm. As he rode about the country, the seed of God sparkled about him like innumerable sparks of fire. If cast into gaol among felons, or cruelly beaten, or set in the stocks, or ridiculed as mad, he still proclaimed the oracles of the Voice within him. If driven from the church, he spoke in the open air; forced from the shelter of the humble alehouse, he slept without fear under a haystack or watched among the furze. His frame in prayer is described

as the most awful, living, and reverent ever felt or seen. By night and by day, by sea and by land, he was always in his place, and always a match for every service and occasion.'

## VI

There, then, he is—the Man, with his Mission and his Message! As Mr. T. Edmund Harvey, M.P., has said, 'we can picture him as he travelled, now on foot and now on horseback, clad in the leathern doublet and breeches, large of frame, with long straight locks (not close cropped in the Puritan fashion), and with those keen flashing eyes which more than once cowed and daunted opponents, even when his life was in danger. Sparing in diet and unwearied by hardships, he went to and fro throughout the whole land, preaching sometimes in churches, sometimes in market-places, in open fields and on the hillside, or in the kitchens and halls of farms and country houses.' He is a prophet; but he is a prophet who keeps his feet on solid ground. He is a mystic; but, of all mystics, he is the most severely practical. Professor William James declares that 'the religion found by Fox is something which it is impossible to overpraise. In a day of shams it was a religion of veracity rooted in spiritual inwardness, and a return to something more like the original gospel than men had ever known in England.' George Fox flashed the radiance that streamed into his own soul into every

crack and cranny and crevice of human activity. 'He opposed injustice wherever he met it,' says Dr. Rufus M. Jones. His enemies sneeringly dubbed him 'the universal reformer' because of the broad area of human experience that his witness penetrated. And why not? For, if Christ is *the Light of the World*, He is the Light of everything and everybody in the world; and George Fox felt that, to every throb and heart-beat of human existence, that Light must be applied.

## VII

Yes; and, if Christ is *the Light of the World*, He is the Light of *all* the world! 'Let your light shine among the Indians!' was George Fox's dying message to the Quakers on the Delaware. 'Let your light shine among the Blacks and Whites that ye may bring them to Christ!' If Christ is *the Light of the World*, he argued, then every continent and island ought to be bathed in His splendour!

*'That far Land of Light!'*

*'Christ Jesus, the Light of the World!'*

*'The Light of the World—the World!'*

During his long, eventful, and adventurous career, George Fox had done all that ingenuity and enthusiasm could suggest to spread the Divine Light to every creature and to every shore. And, on his death-bed, he bequeathed the stupendous task as a sacred charge to his friends and followers. And, a few days later, a great concourse of Quakers gath-

ered round that open grave in Roscoe Street to pay an affectionate tribute to his influence and authority. The record is very touching. 'Divers loving testimonies were given from a lively remembrance of the blessed ministry of this dear and ancient servant of the Lord; his early entering into the Lord's work at the breaking forth of this Gospel day, his innocent life, long and great travels, and unwearied labours of love in the everlasting gospel; the manifold sufferings, afflictions, and opposition which he met and endured; and the turning and gathering of many thousands out of Darkness into the Light of Jesus Christ.'

*Out of Darkness into Light!* The words epitomize the story of his own spiritual pilgrimage.

*Out of Darkness into Light!* The words epitomize the record of his public and world-wide ministry.

*Out of Darkness into Light!* In the hollow tree George Fox found Christ, *the Light of the World—the Light that shineth in darkness*—and, during the forty years that followed, he poured that flood of Living Light into the highways and byways of two continents.

## XVI

### DOCTOR JOHNSON'S TEXT

#### I

DR. SAMUEL JOHNSON is the classical example of an extremely religious man who derived very little comfort from his religion. The old doctor bestrides this narrow world like a colossus. Carlyle calls him the largest soul in all England—a giant, invincible soul. His is one of the most familiar figures in our history. Thanks mainly to Boswell's vivid and palpitating pages, 'the old philosopher is still among us in the rusty coat with the metal buttons and the shirt which ought to be at wash—blinking, puffing, rolling his head, drumming with his fingers, tearing his meat like a tiger, and swallowing his tea in oceans. No human being who has been so long in his grave is so well known to us.' Thus Macaulay, who adds that we have but to open Boswell's unique and immortal volume and, as if by magic, 'the club-room is before us, with the table on which stand the omelet for Nugent and the lemons for Johnson. There are assembled those heads which live for ever on the canvas of Reynolds. There are the spectacles of Burke and the tall thin form of Langton, the courtly sneer of Beauclerk and the beaming smile of Garrick, Gibbon tapping his snuff-box and



Sir Joshua with his trumpet in his ear. And in the foreground is that strange figure which is as familiar to us as the figures of those among whom we have been brought up—the gigantic body; the huge massy face, seamed with the scars of disease; the brown coat; the black worsted stockings, the grey wig with the scorched foretop; the dirty hands, the nails bitten and pared to the quick. We see the eyes and mouth moving with convulsive twitches; we see the heavy form rolling; we hear it puffing; and then comes the "Why, sir!" and the "What then, sir?" and the "No, sir!" and the "Don't you see your way through the question, sir?" Judge him as you may, he is a great character, and as good as he is great. 'Few men on record,' says Carlyle, 'have had a more merciful, tenderly affectionate nature than old Samuel: within that shaggy exterior of his there beat a heart warm as a mother's, soft as a little child's.' And Sir Leslie Stephen avers that of all the heroes, statesmen, philanthropists, and poets who sleep in Westminster Abbey, there are few whom, when all has been said, we can love so heartily as Samuel Johnson. Like all sensible men the doctor dearly loved to be honestly praised; but he would have desired no tribute more eloquent than that.

## II

Now, beyond the shadow of a doubt, Doctor Johnson was an intensely religious man. Indeed, it is no exaggeration to say that his religion was the

biggest thing about him. His face always clouded when he recalled the fact that there was a time when he paid no heed to such things. 'I was,' he once told Boswell, 'for some years totally regardless of religion. It had dropped out of my mind. This was at an early part of my life. Sickness brought it back, and I hope I have never lost it since.' This memorable change took place in his university days. 'When at Oxford,' he says, 'I took up William Law's *Serious Call*, expecting to find it a dull book, and perhaps to laugh at it. But I found Law quite an overmatch for me, and this was the first occasion of my thinking in earnest about religion after I became capable of rational enquiry.' From that moment, he became a profoundly religious man. 'Indeed,' says Mr. A. C. Benson, 'I know no figure in Biography which illustrates more precisely and more convincingly, the sort of religion of which the Englishman wholly approves. There was not a touch of priggishness about Dr. Johnson; he had no sort of sanctimoniousness; he said innumerable severe, humorous, sensible, provocative things. He was full of prejudices and fancies; but he was a wholly serious man, and, what is more remarkable, a devoutly religious man. He never suffered anything that was profane or sceptical, he disliked light-minded speculation on the mysteries of life and death; he had the firmest faith in revealed religion and Christian doctrine.'

Among other things, he was a tremendous be-

liever in the Bible and in prayer. He read as many chapters of the Bible each day as would ensure his completing the entire book once a year. He loved the Church of England Prayer Book, but sometimes thought of collecting the best prayers in the language and putting them together in one volume. When his friends pressed him to carry out the idea, he suddenly grew agitated and exclaimed, 'Let me alone! Let me alone! I am overpowered,' and putting his hands before his face, he bent his head for some time over the table. Mrs. Thrale, in her *Anecdotes*, said that Johnson could never recite that majestic Latin hymn, the *Dies Irae*, without bursting into tears. And who can forget that famous scene at the Literary Club, when one of the members happened to quote a verse from the nineteenth Psalm and the doctor 'caught fire, and, instantly taking off his hat, began with great solemnity, "The spacious firmament on high," and went right through that beautiful hymn. Those who were acquainted with him know how harsh his features in general were; but upon this occasion his face was almost as if it had been the face of an angel.' Very often, Boswell tells us, he would see the doctor rocking himself in his chair with an extraordinary see-saw movement, muttering away to himself as he did so, and, by straining his ears to catch the words, the biographer would realize that the doctor was praying.

When nearing his fiftieth birthday the doctor re-

views his past life and draws up a list of eight resolutions by means of which he hopes to shape the days to come. 'Having lived,' he says, 'not without an habitual reverence for the Sabbath, yet without that attention to its religious duties which Christianity requires, I resolve henceforth—*First*, to rise early on Sabbath morning, and, in order to do that, to go to sleep early on Saturday night. *Second*, to use some more than ordinary devotion as soon as I rise. *Third*, to examine into the tenor of my life, and particularly the last week, and to mark my advances in religion, or my recessions from it. *Fourth* to read the Scriptures methodically, with such helps as are at hand. *Fifth*, to go to church twice. *Sixth*, to read books of divinity, either speculative or practical. *Seventh*, to instruct my family. *Eighth*, to wear off by meditation any worldly soil contracted in the week.'

Moreover, this intensely religious man is intensely practical in his religion. In the most pitiful days of his poverty, his purse—for what it was worth—was always at the disposal of his still poorer friends. And look at this! 'Coming home late one night,' Boswell says, 'the doctor found a poor woman lying in the street, so much exhausted that she could not walk; he took her on his back and carried her to his house, where he discovered that she was one of those wretched females who had fallen into the lowest state of vice, poverty, and disease. Instead of harshly upbraiding her, he had her taken care of

with all tenderness for a long time at considerable expense, and endeavoured to put her in a virtuous way of living.' And was there ever such an asylum as that house at Gough Square? It was, as Macaulay says, the home of the most extraordinary assemblage of inmates that ever was brought together. 'It was a strange menagerie. All these poor creatures were at constant war with each other and with Johnson's negro servant, Frank. Sometimes, indeed, they transferred their hostilities from the servant to the master, complained that a better table was not kept for them, and railed or whined until their benefactor was glad to escape to Mitre Tavern. And yet he who was so prompt to resent anything which looked like a slight on the part of a purse-proud bookseller, or a noble and powerful patron, bore from mendicants who, but for his bounty, must have gone to the poorhouse, the most provoking insults!' Johnson's religion revealed itself even in his relations with his pets. He habitually went out himself to buy the cat's food, lest his negro servant should feel degraded at being required to wait upon an animal, or lest, being put to the trouble, he should take a dislike to the poor creature!

### III

Yet, although such an intensely religious man, applying his religion alike to the most momentous and to the most trivial affairs of life, the fact remains that he derived very little comfort from it.



I wonder why! Surely Boswell can tell us! He can—and does! In the closing passage of his greatest of all biographies, Boswell says that the doctor spent all his days in the deep shadow thrown by one stupendous text. That text hung over his head like a thundercloud. It was this: *Of him to whom much is given, much will be required.* That text kept the soul of Samuel Johnson in perpetual twilight. He was not ignorant—how could he be?—of his own greatness. He knew that to him many talents had been committed and he dreaded the day of reckoning. *Much will be required!* The words perpetually haunted him, making solitude frightful 'This solemn text was ever in his mind,' Boswell said: 'making him dissatisfied with his labours and acts of goodness, however notable.'

He had the words: *The Night Cometh!* inscribed on the face of his watch, so that, whenever he consulted it, he might be stirred to vigilance and activity. *The Night Cometh!* Dr. Johnson was like a nervous child, always dreading the dark. His text terrified him. *Of him to whom much is given, much will be required.* 'Death, my dear,' he says, in one of his last letters, 'is very dreadful.' That thought was the black dog, as he called it, that was always staring him in the face and always showing its teeth. As he advanced in life, he hated the approach of a birthday; he was offended if his friends sent him greetings; he could not bear to think that his years were running out. A gladsome religion

was beyond his comprehension. He found fault with Dr. Blair for saying in a sermon that 'the man who does not feel joy in religion is far from the kingdom of heaven.' 'There are many good men,' replied Johnson, 'whose *fear* of God predominates over their *love*.' Among those who tried to introduce a little sunshine into his faith was Dr. Adams. 'I am terribly afraid of death,' said Johnson; 'I think I may be one of those who shall be damned!' 'What do you mean by damned?' asked Dr. Adams. 'Sent to hell, sir,' replied the old doctor, 'and punished everlastingly.' 'Death,' he says again, 'is a terrible thing to face. The man who says he is not afraid of it, lies. Yet, as murderers have met it bravely on the scaffold, when the time comes so perhaps may I. In the meantime I am horribly afraid. The future is dark.' One Good Friday morning—it was in 1773—Boswell and Johnson, having breakfasted together on tea and hot cross buns, attended the service at St. Clement Danes. 'His behaviour was,' says Boswell, 'as I had imagined to myself, solemnly devout. I shall never forget the tremulous earnestness with which he pronounced the awful petition in the Litany: "In the hour of death, and in the Day of Judgement, good Lord, deliver us."'

*Of him to whom much is given, much will be required;* that was Dr. Johnson's text.

*In the hour of death, and in the Day of Judgement, good Lord, deliver us!* that was Doctor John-

son's prayer. He lived all his days in the twilight; yet sunshine came at last.

IV

As I have pointed out in my chapter on Augustus Toplady's *Text*, Professor George Jackson says that he can never read Dr. Johnson's *Prayers and Meditations* without wishing that Johnson and Toplady had met. 'Johnson's is such a moving little book,' says Professor Jackson. 'Can anyone read it and not be touched to the quick by the great, sad sincerity of soul which breathes through its every page, and at the same time without a sigh of regret that there was not some one at hand who could have shown Johnson a more excellent way? If only Toplady could have taught him to sing

Nothing in my hand I bring.  
Simply to Thy cross I cling,

what a difference it might have made! Religion would have been a bridge instead of a burden, something to carry him instead of something for him to carry!' But perhaps the old doctor caught a glimpse of the truth that set Toplady singing. Let us see!

In his seventy-second year, Boswell says, Doctor Johnson repeated to Mr. Langton, with great energy, the gracious words of forgiveness that our Saviour addressed to Mary Magdalene: *Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.* 'The manner of this dismissal,' added the doctor, 'is exceedingly affect-

ing.' I see something wonderfully suggestive in that earnest recital and especially in that emphatic remark.

By this time, to quote Macaulay again, the infirmities of age were coming fast upon him. 'That inevitable event of which he never thought without horror was brought near to him: and his whole life was darkened by the shadow of death. But when at length the moment, dreaded through so many years, came close, the dark cloud passed away from Johnson's mind. His temper became unusually patient and gentle; he ceased to think with terror of death, and of that which lies beyond death; and he spoke much of the mercy of God and of the propitiation of Christ.'

Dr. Brockelesby, his medical adviser, was with him to the last. He asked if he had any chance of recovery. 'Give me,' he begged, 'a faithful answer.' The doctor told him the truth. 'Then,' said Johnson, 'I will take no more physic, not even my opiates; for I desire to render up my soul to God unclouded!' 'For some time before his death,' says Dr. Brockelesby, 'all his fears were calmed. He talked to me about the necessity of faith in the sacrifice of Jesus as necessary, beyond all good works whatever, for the salvation of mankind. He pressed me to study Dr. Clarke and to read his sermons. I asked him why he specially commended Dr. Clarke, and he replied that it was because Dr. Clarke made most of Christ's redeeming sacrifice.' He sent for Frank,

his negro servant. 'Attend, Frank, above all else,' he pleaded, 'to the salvation of your soul—*that* is of supreme importance.' He took the Communion and, before doing so, lifted up his trembling voice in prayer.

'Almighty and Most Merciful Father,' he prayed, 'I am now, as to human eyes it seems, about to commemorate, for the last time, the death of my Redeemer. Grant, O Lord, that my whole hope and confidence may be in His merits and Thy mercy; enforce and accept my imperfect repentance; and make the death of Thy Son effectual to my redemption. Pardon the multitude of my offences; support me in the hour of death; and receive me to everlasting happiness, for the sake of Jesus Christ. Amen.'

What is this but a tempest-tossed soul clinging to the Rock of Ages?

Nothing in my hand I bring.  
Simply to Thy cross I cling.

The old doctor's face was turned toward the sunrise after all! Even Augustus Toplady could have taught ~~him~~ nothing more.



## XVII

### BLAISE PASCAL'S TEXT

#### I

THE conversion of Blaise Pascal is one of the shining events in the stately history of the Christian Church. Seldom has so mighty an intellect submitted with such perfect grace to the authority of the Saviour. Pascal is not only one of the world's epoch-makers; he is one of the architects of civilization. Every day of our lives we all of us do things that, but for Pascal, we could never have done. Every day of our lives we enjoy comforts and privileges that, but for him, could never have been ours. His commanding personality and triumphant reason dominate human life at every turn. He is one of history's quiet conquerors; he does not advertise himself; his work does not lend itself to parade or display; yet, put him among the giants of the past, and most of them are instantly dwarfed by his presence. Few names, as Principal Tulloch says, are more classical than his. 'Though cut off at the early age of thirty-nine, there is hardly any name more famous at once in literature, science, and religion.' For three centuries every thinker of note has been profoundly influenced by him. The annals of France glitter with a multitude of bril-

liant personalities; but none of them shine with a lustre that is comparable to that of Pascal.

## II

He was only a youth when he shook the dust of the world from his feet and entered upon the life of a lay solitary at Port Royal; yet the amazing thing is that, by that time, he had established a reputation for mathematical audacity, philosophical originality, and scientific ingenuity which no record in the world's long history can rival. He was, Bossuet says, endowed by Nature with all the gifts of understanding; a geometer of the first rank; a profound logician, a lofty and eloquent writer. If, Bossuet maintains, we scan a list of his inventions and discoveries, and then reflect that, in addition, he wrote one of the most perfect works that has ever appeared in the French language, and that in all his books there are passages of unrivalled eloquence and depth of reflection, we shall come to the conclusion that a greater genius never existed in any country or in any age. Again and again, whilst Pascal was a mere boy, Paris was electrified by his dazzling discoveries. As one reads the romantic and almost incredible story of those early years, it is impossible to repress a conjecture as to the part that he would have played in the history of the world, and the sensational changes that he would have effected, *if* he had persisted in the career to which he devoted his earlier years, and *if* he had

been spared to old age in the pursuit of those researches.

The bent of his mind betrayed itself as soon as he was out of his cradle. Like John Stuart Mill, he was educated by his father. Like the elder Mill, the elder Pascal had ideas of his own concerning the intellectual development and ultimate career of his boy. But there is an essential difference between the two cases. John Stuart Mill loyally adopted his father's ideas and dutifully followed the path that had been prepared for his feet. Blaise Pascal, on the contrary, rebelled against the programme mapped out for him, and eventually brought his father to his own way of thinking.

The elder Pascal was obsessed by one all-mastering prejudice. He was determined, come what might, that his boy should have nothing to do with mathematics. He was himself a mathematician; and experience had taught him that the study of mathematics captivates and monopolizes the mind to the exclusion of all other themes. He therefore set himself to guard his son's mind from all contact with mathematical lore. Every book that touched on mathematical problems was carefully concealed; in the presence of the boy the father abstained from discussing mathematical topics with his friends; and, to make matters absolutely secure, the father set his son such difficult lessons in Latin and other languages as would leave him neither time nor energy nor inclination for the speculations that he so

ardently desired him to eschew. But, in all this, the elder Pascal resembles nothing so much as an anxious hen frantically endeavouring to teach her brood of ducklings to avoid the water towards which all the instincts of their nature are impelling them.

## III

As a child Pascal was characterized by an extraordinary and insatiable curiosity. It was not merely the passive curiosity that smiles, wonders, and passes on: it was the active curiosity that insists on investigating the why and the wherefore of each arresting circumstance and phenomenon. He was little more than an infant when he noticed that a plate, struck with a knife, emits a loud and lingering sound; but that, as soon as a hand is laid upon it; the sound instantly ceases. Every child has noticed this, and has been interested and amused by it: but the matter has ended there. Pascal, however, immediately initiated a series of experiments based upon this curious happening. *Why* did the knife awaken the sound? *Why* did the fingers silence it? The boy was soon working out a philosophy of sounds. His father had forbidden his meddling with geometry in any form; but the temptation was too great. In the secrecy of his own room he kept a supply of charcoal and a few boards. On these he practised making circles that should be perfectly round, triangles whose angles should be exactly equal, and other figures of the kind. Working away by himself, he

came, quite independently, to many of the conclusions elaborated by Euclid. On one such occasion, the father crept into the room on tiptoe. The boy was so engrossed in his demonstrations that for some time he was unaware of his father's presence. The father stood for a while dumbfounded. He felt as the hen may be supposed to feel when she sees the ducklings well out on the pond. He recognized that the boy was in his element. Startled by the brilliance of his son's genius, he left the room without saying a word. And, with a wisdom that does him credit, he strode off to the city to secure for the youth teachers who would be able to assist him along the line for which he had so obvious a bent.

At the age of sixteen, Pascal wrote his famous treatise on Conic Sections. The most brilliant Frenchmen of the time were staggered. With one accord they declared that it was the most powerful and valuable contribution that had been made to mathematical science since the days of Archimedes. Whilst still in his 'teens, Pascal made up his mind that Science, to fulfil its destiny, must relate itself to the industry and commerce of the workaday world. Acting on this principle, he began by inventing a calculating machine and finished by inventing, on his deathbed, the commonplace but useful vehicle that we now call an omnibus. The difficulties involved in the construction of the calculating machine prevented its being of much use to his own generation; but, later on, those obstacles



were overcome, and the contrivance of Pascal paved the way for all the cash registers and adding-machines of our modern shops and offices. But perhaps the greatest triumph of Pascal's genius was his discovery that atmosphere has definite weight, and that the level of the mercury varies in different altitudes and different weather. Sir David Brewster has given us a vivid and amusing description of the experiments made by Pascal first at the base, and then at the summit, of the Puy-de-Dome on the memorable day on which he established his historic conclusions. On that day—Saturday, September 19, 1648—Pascal virtually gave us the barometer, and thus made a contribution to the science of meteorology which it is impossible now to overvalue. This triumph led him to his prolonged series of researches concerning the equilibrium of fluids; and there are those who regard his treatise on this subject as his crowning achievement. But, however that may be, there he stands! He is still in the twenties; yet all the world knows him as a thinker of unsurpassed brilliance and audacity; as a scientist who knows how to harness the most profound erudition to the most practical ends; and as a writer who can express the most abstruse ideas in language that a little child can understand.

## IV

The greatest day in Pascal's life was the day of his conversion. Except in the light of that momen-

tous happening, his biography is unintelligible. As Dean Church puts it, the religion of Pascal is essentially the religion of a converted man. He was thirty-one at the time; and so overwhelming was the flood-tide of divine grace that came surging into his heart that, to the day of his death, he wore, stitched into his doublet, a piece of parchment on which he had recorded the exact hour of that unforgettable experience. It was *in the year of grace 1654, on Monday the twenty-third of November, from half-past ten in the evening until half an hour after midnight.*

Yet whilst in *one* sense, that conversion of his was so sudden and cataclysmic that he can chronicle with the utmost definiteness the precise moment at which it took place, there is *another* sense in which it was very gradual. I can trace its slow development. Eight years earlier, in 1646, a number of excellent books had fallen into his hands. This course of reading so affected him, his sister tells us, that he came to the conclusion that, to be a Christian, a man ought to live only for God and to seek no object but His pleasure. 'This became so evident to my brother, and so imperative, that he relinquished for a time all his scientific researches and set himself to seek that *one thing needful* of which our Lord has spoken.'

Having once applied himself to this sublime quest, he kept his eyes wide open. The most arresting object on his horizon was the exquisite beauty of

his sister's life. In earlier days, *his* studious ways had rebuked her frivolity and led her to seriousness: now *her* devotion shames his worldliness. She led a life of such sweetness, unselfishness, and charm that her very presence was a perpetual benediction on everybody in the house. It was a poignant grief to her to see her brother, to whom she felt that she owed the grace that she herself enjoyed, bemoaning the destitution of his own soul. She saw him frequently, pitied him increasingly, and pleaded with him to abandon everything that clogged his spirit and to yield himself without reserve to the Saviour.

The momentous crisis was precipitated at length by accident. 'One day,' says Bossuet, 'when he went to take his daily drive to the bridge of Neuilly in a carriage and four, the two leading horses became restive at a point at which the road was bounded by a parapet over the river. They reared and plunged and eventually, to the horror of the onlookers, flung themselves over the stonework into the Seine. Fortunately, the first strokes of their feet broke the traces which bound them to the pole, and the carriage hung suspended on the brink of the parapet. The effect of such a shock to a man of Pascal's feeble health may be imagined. He swooned away and was restored only with difficulty. His nerves were so shattered that, long afterwards, during sleepless nights and moments of weakness, he seemed to see a precipice at his bedside over which he was on the point of falling.' This happened in

October, 1654; a month later he found joy and peace in believing. 'On the night of the twenty-third of November,' says Madame Duclaux, 'he found himself unable to sleep, and lay in bed reading the Scriptures. Suddenly his eyes dazzled; a flame of fire seemed to envelop him. Such a moment of marvellous euphoria could never be forgotten, and, in mortal words, could never be expressed. It found natural utterance in floods of tears and in that fragmentary speech which, like so many sobs, Pascal employs in that mystic Memorial which thenceforth he ever wore in secret, sewn into his clothes like a talisman. Here it is:

**FIRE!**

*Certainty! Joy! Peace!*

*I forget the world and everything but God!*

*Righteous Father, the world hath  
not known Thee, but I have known Thee!*

*Joy, Joy, Joy! Tears of Joy!*

*Jesus!*

*Jesus!*

*I separated myself from Him; renounced and  
crucified Him!*

*They have forsaken ME, the fountain of living  
waters!*

*I separated myself from HIM!*

*May I not be separated from Him eternally!*

*I submit myself absolutely to*

**JESUS CHRIST MY REDEEMER.**

In that hour, Blaise Pascal, the mightiest thinker of his time, was converted! 'All in a moment,' as Viscount St. Cyres puts it, 'he was touched by God. He was caught in the grip of a mysterious Power. Some strange spiritual chemistry blotted out his former tastes and inclinations and left him a new being.' He himself called it his conversion; and, in order that others might share with him the rapture of so radiant an experience, he sat down almost at once and wrote his treatise *On the Conversion of the Sinner*. And, if ever we are tempted to suppose that his fire-baptism was simply one moment of frenzy punctuating a life of scholarly frigidity, we are confronted by the significant circumstance that, to his dying day, he wore the Memorial next to his heart. He was loyal to his vision to the end. 'And so,' he wrote, when nearing his goal, 'and so I stretch forth my hands to my Redeemer, who came to earth to suffer and to die for me.' In that faith—so simple yet so sublime—so personal yet so profound—Pascal rested serenely to the last.

*My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.* This is the passage that was running in Pascal's mind that November midnight; and he inscribed it across the very centre of his historic Memorial.

'His eyes had been opened,' says Dean Church. 'He felt himself touched and overcome by the great-



ness and the reasonableness of things unseen. He consciously turned to God, not from vice, but from the bondage of the interests of time, from the fascination of a merely intellectual life and from the frivolity which forgets the other world in this.'

Here then are *the cisterns, the broken cisterns that can hold no water*—'the bondage of the interests of time; from the fascination of a merely intellectual life; the frivolity which forgets the other world in this!'

And here is *the fountain of living waters* that he for so long forsook! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus! Jesus Christ my Redeemer! From that November midnight, Jesus was everything to Pascal—*everything!* 'His whole argument,' says Viscount St. Cyres, 'centres in the person of the Redeemer.' 'To him,' says Principal Tulloch, 'Christ was the only solution of all human perplexities.' From the age of thirty-one to the day of his death, at the age of thirty-nine, he had but one desire: he lived that he might turn the thoughts of his fellow men to his Saviour.

It may be that, during those last years of his brief life, he devoted less time to science, although, as his biographers are careful to show, he by no means relinquished it. But, as against this, we must remember that, during those closing years, he wrote a book that will be treasured as long as the world stands. Lord Avebury included it in his list of the best books ever written. And nobody has read

Pascal's *Thoughts* without being lifted by it into a clearer atmosphere and helped to a loftier plane.

Blaise Pascal was endowed with a soul of singularly delicate texture. He had a mind that was amazingly sensitive to all those vibrations by which truth reveals itself to men; he had an eye that was quick to see beauty in whatever form it presented itself; he had a heart that insistently hungered for the sublime. In his early days he saw the *High* and it entranced him; but on that never-to-be-forgotten November night, he saw the *Highest*. Without reserve and without delay he laid all his marvellous faculties of heart and brain at the feet of the Saviour Who, that night, had revealed himself in such a bewildering wealth of power and grace.

## XVIII

### LEO TOLSTOY'S TEXT

#### I

THIS dried-up little man sitting on the stone bench in the shade of the cypress tree, looking so very lean, so very small and so very gray, scarcely strikes you as being in many ways the most notable figure on the world's horizon. And yet on closer scrutiny you catch a hint of an unplumbed depth within him. 'He gives you the impression,' says Maxim Gorky, 'of having just arrived from some distant country, where people think and feel differently, and their relations and language are different. He sits in solitude, tired and gray, as though the dust of another earth were on him, and he looks attentively at everything with the look of a foreigner or of a dumb man. His eyes are keen, his glance piercing, his face wrinkled, his beard white and long. He listens attentively, as though recalling something which he has forgotten, or as though waiting for something new and unknown.'

This shrivelled but impressive old man, drawing near to the end of his long eventful day, is Leo Tolstoy; and, for nearly a generation, Leo Tol-

stoy has been the most striking and picturesque personality in Europe. 'During the last twenty years of his life,' says Mr. George R. Noyes, 'he was the best-known citizen in the world of thought; his portrait and the general type of his personality were as familiar as those of his antithesis, Prince Bismarck. When he died, no writer remained whose fame even distantly compared with his own. His works had been translated into almost all civilized languages and had been read by millions of men and women, from academicians to peasants and factory labourers. No other author has ever attained during his own lifetime such universal fame as Tolstoy.' 'He is the most notable man of letters now living,' wrote Mr. Stead, nearly forty years ago; 'there is no Russian so famous; and, outside Russia, there is no literary personality so conspicuous. His novels are read everywhere, in every language; his ideas attract the attention of everybody who thinks. He has been a soldier, a man of the world, a student, a recluse, a visionary, and a reformer. He is at once a great genius, a consummate artist, and a religious apostle.' Every spiritual pilgrimage is worth tracing; but few are more intricate, more involved or more instructive than is his.

Leo Tolstoy was the most persistent and most passionate seeker that the world has ever known. His whole life was a search. Was ever a quest so penetrating and so audacious? He found himself endowed with the mystery of life and he was re-

solved to know the reason why. Who had sent him into the world? What end was his life designed to compass? what was to become of him after he had succeeded—or failed? In seeking a solution of these riddles he overhauled the universe and ransacked everything in it. He took nothing for granted. He closed his mind against no conclusion, however improbable or however appalling. Every guess that the philosophers had made was worthy of attention; every theory was entitled to painstaking examination. In his daring search, he knocked at the door of heaven and rattled at the gates of hell. He scaled the heights and sounded the depths. Nothing was too exalted, and nothing too debased, for investigation. He sought through boyhood, youth, manhood, and old age. He lived seeking and died seeking; yet, between his earlier seeking and his later seeking, there was an eternity of difference. For, when the silver was creeping into his hair, he came to see that there is virtue in seeking as well as in finding; indeed, that there is greater virtue in seeking than in finding. After he made that notable discovery, he still sought; but he sought with a smile on his face and a song in his heart. He still sought, for he had learned from Pascal that seeking is itself success; ‘thou wouldst not seek Him if thou hadst not already found Him.’ He still sought, for, strangely enough, he found in the very act of seeking the answer to his lifelong question. Why had he been sent into the world? He had been sent into



the world to *seek*! But perhaps I had better let him state his surprising conclusion in his own way.

II

*Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness:* this is Tolstoy's text. In one of his later works, I find it inscribed on almost every page.

'What is the aim of human life?' he asks, repeating the question that had baffled him for so many years. 'What is the aim of human life? Why do I live? Only religion can answer that question. And this is the answer: *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.* Living to ourselves, we seek happiness and do not find it: but *seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness*, we obtain peace, freedom, and joy without seeking them.'

'Look at yourself,' he says again, 'and understand who you are, and what you are, and what you live for. The personal good of the individual man, or even of the family or of the State, cannot be the ultimate aim of life. The meaning of human life does not consist in each man's acquiring his personal and short-lived good at the expense of another. The meaning of your life can only be the fulfilment of His will who, for the attainment of His ends, has sent you into this life. You must understand that your life is not yours, not your property, but His who produced it for His own pur-

poses. The highest possible good can be yours only on condition that you do His will. Therefore, above all else, *seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.*'

This is the essence of Tolstoyism; it represents his teaching in a nutshell. As a result of all his seeking, he found that he was to seek still. He had come into the world *to seek*. *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.*

'You would not know Leo,' wrote the Countess to a friend, in 1881, 'he is so changed. He has become a Christian, and he remains one, so steadfast and true!'

This is the end of the long, long quest. I wonder if we can trace the steps by which he reached that sublime conclusion?

### III

One only searches for a thing of which he feels the need. The first step in a great search is the dawn of the desire. I catch odd, but significant glimpses of Leo Tolstoy in the days in which the yearning of his heart is beginning to assert itself. He is a little boy—shockingly plain and extremely sensitive about it. At times he is so oppressed by a consciousness of his unattractiveness that he runs away and hides himself in the woods. In the course of one of these solitary expeditions, a startling thought takes possession of him. Perhaps he found

a dead bird among the autumn leaves, or a dead squirrel lying stiff and stark, under a beech tree. At any rate, he confronts the fact of *death*. Everything dies. *He* must die. What then? It seems to him that the only sensible course is to enjoy the present: the future is clearly beyond our ken. He therefore hurries home; tucks himself cosily in bed; reads exciting novels, and sucks as many sweetmeats as his pocket-money will provide!

I see him again. He is a little older. He and his brother Nicholas—who is six years his senior—are digging a grave on a lonely hillside. But what are they burying? These two youths have formed a society: it is called the 'Ant-Brothers'; it is to embrace all mankind in a union of sympathy and affection. They have decided to bury a green stick as a kind of charm to celebrate the founding of this sublime society. On that very spot, more than seventy years afterwards, another burial took place. For, when Tolstoy lay dying, he begged that he might be laid to rest where he and Nicholas buried the green stick long years ago. That spot will always represent one of humanity's most cherished places of pilgrimage.

Then, as the *Confession* shows, he plunges into the abyss. 'I remember,' he says, 'that in my twelfth year, a boy, now long since dead, a pupil in the gymnasium, spent a Sunday with us and brought us the news of the last discovery in the gymnasium, namely, that *there was no God*, and that

all we were taught on that subject was a pure invention. How interested we were! We all eagerly accepted the theory as something particularly attractive and possibly quite true.' Thus he lost God, but it was not a very great loss. For until then, he says, he had believed in God, or rather, he had not denied God; but in *what* God he so languidly believed he could not have said. Then, for years, like a ship without chart and compass, he drifted at the mercy of every gust that blew.

'I cannot recall these years,' he tells us, 'without horror and disgust. I killed men in war; I challenged others to duels in order to kill them; I squandered money at cards; I ill-treated my peasantry; I rioted with loose women; I deceived men. Lying, robbery, adultery, fornication, drunkenness, violence, murder—there was no crime that I left uncommitted; and yet I was considered by my equals as a comparatively moral man.'

And yet, beneath all this, there is something deeper. For all the time, he honestly desired to be a good and virtuous and useful man; 'but every time I tried to express the longings of my heart I was met with contempt and derisive laughter; but, directly I gave way to the lowest of my passions, I was praised and encouraged.' And so, as Mrs. Creighton says, we see the young Tolstoy, loving pleasure, eager to shine as a man of fashion, indulging freely in the vicious habits of the young men of his day, but with a constant sense of discontent

with himself, a constant effort after a higher life. He is always making rules for his life, and always breaking them. The whole story, as Mr. Winstanley, points out, shows the agony of a great soul struggling in the deepest abysses of doubt, astray in a universe where all seems chaotic, dark, and meaningless, with no firm footing anywhere. In a word, Tolstoy is lost! He is lost, but he is seeking; he is seeking, but he is lost!

IV

In his extremity, he sees three possible means of escape.

(1) He can hark back to his childish philosophy—the philosophy of the sweetmeats and the novels. *'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die!'* He can drown thought in delirious enjoyments.

(2) He can commit suicide. The thought so fascinated him that, for years, he had all ropes hidden from his sight and refused to carry a gun lest the sudden temptation should be too strong for him.

(3) He could become, at least externally, religious. Tolstoy sought, passionately and despairingly, to gain his faith; he conformed to all the ceremonial requirements of the Greek Church; prayed morning and evening; fasted and prepared for the Communion; he took a pleasure in sacrificing his bodily comfort by kneeling and by rising to attend early service; he took pleasure, too, in mortifying



his intellectual pride by forcing himself to believe doctrines which he had formerly condemned.'

## V

Tolstoy was fifty when, very abruptly, the light broke upon him. 'My whole life,' he says, 'underwent a sudden transformation. Everything was completely changed.' It was, he tells us, as if he had long been adrift in an open boat, lost on a waste of waters, and had all at once sighted the shore.

At fifty, Tolstoy was a man of world-wide fame. He had achieved distinction as a novelist; was extremely wealthy; and, physically, was immensely strong. He had a beautiful estate, devoted servants, congenial friends, and was happy in his home, in his wife, and in his family. But the old craving was still there, and his greatest satisfaction lay in exchanging spiritual experiences with the peasants about the farm. Monks, priests, and theologians had failed to help him; but there was something about the fervant faith of these ploughmen and drovers that profoundly appealed to him. Professor William James and Mr. G. H. Perris both likened Tolstoy to Bunyan. The spiritual analogy is very close. The light came to Bunyan through listening to the conversation of four poor women sitting in the sun; the mind of Tolstoy was illumined by the conversation of his peasantry. But, stimulating as was the talk of the peasants, it was in an hour of solitude that the crisis came. He is in

the woods, alone. 'I was thinking of only one thing,' he says, 'I was seeking after God. Long ago I should have killed myself had I not cherished a dim hope of one day finding Him.' That reflection threw open the gates of salvation. For if, as it seemed to him now, he had really lived only when he had been seeking God, then God must have been with him all the time! 'Thou wouldst not have sought Him,' said Pascal, 'if thou hadst not already found Him!' Tolstoy was dazzled by excess of light. 'What more do I seek?' a voice seemed to cry within him. 'This is He—He without whom there is no life! To know God and to live are one! God is life! Live to seek God and life will not be without Him!'

'My God, I thank Thee!' he cried; swallowed down the sobs that arose; and brushed away with both hands the tears that filled his eyes.

'One is bewildered,' says Mr. Arthur C. Turberville, 'by the constant changefulness of Tolstoy's life up to this point. His was a heart that knew no rest. He tried everything, yet nothing for long. From the moment of the great change, however, he never deviated. All that he had previously dreamed of goodness, purity, peace, and love, flashed upon him with all the force of a revelation from the picture of Jesus in the gospels. Christ made his aspirations tangible.'

From that hour he set himself, with all the intensity of his being, to *seek first the Kingdom of*

*God and His righteousness*, and to call upon others to do the same. The words were continually upon his lips and they trickled more easily than any others from his pen.

*Seek!*

*Seek first!* I once preached on the text in New Zealand. As I concluded, an old lady of seventy-two rose from her seat and, in the presence of the whole congregation, came and kneeled at the rail at my feet. 'I've left it very late,' she said, during the singing of the hymn, 'but when you kept saying: *Seek first! Seek first! Seek first!* I couldn't wait a moment longer. Do you think I've left it too long?' For fifteen years after that she maintained a wonderful ministry in that congregation pleading with the young men and maidens not to repeat her sad mistake.

*Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you.*

And so Tolstoy sought and found—and sought still. He died a joyous seeker. 'He remains,' says Mr. A. C. Benson, 'he remains one of the most impressive figures of the century. As a writer he was a man of amazing genius, and yet this was by no means the best or even the greatest part of him. He may be described as one of the most typical human beings that ever lived, because in his spirit the temptations and basenesses of humanity and its virtues and grandeurs, all at a white-hot intensity of passion, waged a ceaseless strife. Few in-

deed are like him, yet few can read his writings without feeling in some degree or other his likeness to themselves. It is this that gives him a surpassing fascination, that he is a sinner close to the heart of the sinful world doomed to death, and yet a passionate seeker after God; proud and defiant, and yet with a deep sincerity desiring to serve the law of Christ.' Yes, that is it: *a sinner close to the heart of the sinful world*, he calls all men everywhere to *seek first the Kingdom*; and the wise will lose not a moment in responding to that earnest and insistent call.

## XIX

### HOPEFUL'S TEXT

#### I

WHEN the pilgrims were taking a reluctant farewell of the Delectable Mountains, the shepherds who had so hospitably entertained them warned them concerning the Enchanted Ground that lay but a short distance ahead of them. 'Beware,' they said, 'of sleeping there; for he who sleeps on the Enchanted Ground will never wake again!' When, however, the pilgrims reached the treacherous and seductive spot, they were so drowsy that they could scarcely keep their eyelids apart. Hopeful pleaded for one little nap, but Christian would not hear of it. And, to put the matter beyond the pale of possibility, he made his companion talk. 'Tell me,' he said, 'by what means you were led to go on pilgrimage.' And, when Hopeful unfolded his story, it turned, as so many stories do, upon a text. He told how, in his anxiety and concern, he had opened his mind to Faithful. For Hopeful was a citizen of Vanity Fair and it was at Vanity Fair that Faithful had suffered martyrdom. And Faithful, he explained, had urged him to look in his distress to Jesus and to cry to God for mercy.



'And,' asked Christian, partly because he was interested and partly because he was anxious to keep his companion talking, 'did you do as you were bidden?'

'Yes,' replied Hopeful, 'over and over and over again.'

'And did the Father reveal the Son to you?'

'Not at first, nor second, nor third, nor fourth, nor fifth, no, nor at the sixth time neither.'

'What did you do then?'

'What! Why, I could not tell what to do.'

'Had you no thoughts of leaving off praying?'

'Yes, an hundred times, twice told.'

'And what was the reason you did not?'

'This word from Habakkuk came into my mind: *I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me. . . . Though the vision tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come; it will not tarry.* So I continued praying until the Father showed me the Son.'

'And how,' asked Christian, determined that the conversation, once started, should know no lull, 'how was He revealed to you?'

'One day,' replied Hopeful, 'I was very sad; sadder, I think, than I had ever been before; and this sadness was through a fresh sight of the greatness and vileness of my sins. And as I was then looking for nothing but the everlasting damnation of my soul, suddenly, as I thought, I saw the Lord Jesus

look down from heaven upon me, saying: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "But," I replied, "I am a great, a very great sinner, O Lord!" and He answered: "My grace is sufficient for thee!" And now was my heart full of joy, mine eyes full of tears and mine affections running over!

And so Hopeful told how, by means of the text, he was led into the faith that persevered and overcame; and, by the mere telling of the story, he and his fellow pilgrim were saved from sleeping on the Enchanted Ground.

## II

Habakkuk is the sceptic of the Old Testament as Thomas is the sceptic of the New. He stands in a maze of bewilderment. He cannot reconcile fact and faith. If God is in His heaven, why are things as they are? The earth, he cries, is deluged in wickedness; the innocent are like fish caught in the tyrant's drag-net; right is on the scaffold and wrong is on the throne! It is the old, old mystery: the problem that has shaken the faith alike of the simpleton and of the sage. It has sent men like Goethe and women like George Eliot out into the bleak wilderness of doubt and uncertainty; it has puzzled minds not given to suspicion and distrust.

'God lets them!' cried poor George Harris, in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, as he bitterly enumerated the atrocities committed by the pitiless slave-holders.

He writhes at the thought that, do what he may, he is still a slave and that his wife and child may be sold away from him at any moment. 'They buy and sell us, and make trade of our heart's blood and groans and tears, and God lets them, He does; *God lets them!*'

And Dickens has shown how poor demented Barnaby Rudge was baffled by the same acute perplexity. Gabriel Vardon comes upon Barnaby, the lunatic lad, at dead of night, bending over the prostrate, bleeding form of a man who has fallen a victim to highway robbery. 'See,' says Barnaby, 'when I talk of eyes the stars come out! Whose eyes are they? If they are angels' eyes, why do they look down here and see good men hurt, and only wink and sparkle all the night?'

That is the question—Barnaby's question; George Harris's question; my question; everybody's question! The distinction of Habakkuk lies not in the question, but in the answer. He simply declines to answer it. 'I do not understand,' he says, 'so I will keep an open mind. I will stand; I will watch; I will tarry; I will wait with patience till the explanation comes!' In his *Foundations of Zoology*, Professor W. K. Brooks declares that the hardest of intellectual virtues is philosophic doubt. 'Suspended judgement,' he adds, 'is the supreme triumph of intellectual discipline.' It is the glory of Habakkuk that he develops that hardest of all the intellectual virtues and achieves that 'supreme triumph of in-

tellectual discipline.' Anybody, seeing difficulties in belief, can rush to unbelief; anybody, finding faith in seeming conflict with the facts of life, can abandon faith. Habakkuk declines to do anything of the kind. He knows a more excellent way.

*'I will stand upon my watch,'* he says, *'and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what He will say unto me. . . . Though the vision tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come; it will not tarry.'*

### III

Habakkuk is the supreme example of the *Jealousy of a Staggering Faith*. 'To the watch-tower!' he says; he realizes that he has something to guard. 'To the ramparts!' he says; he realizes that he has something to hold.

*On my watch-tower will I stand,  
And take up my post on the rampart;  
I will watch to see what He says to me  
And what answer I get back to my plea.*

The translation is that of Principal Sir George Adam Smith. 'Through these words,' says that greatest of our Hebrew scholars, 'through these choice words there breathes a noble sense of responsibility. The prophet feels that he has a post to hold, a rampart to guard. He knows the heritage of truth, won by the great minds of the past; and, in a world seething with disorder, he will take his stand upon *that*, and see what more his God will send him.' A merchant who, to-day, finds things

going hardly with him, clings all the more tenaciously to the treasure which he has accumulated in more prosperous years. Like the bees that, in the winter, live on the honey that they have stored in the summer, the soul must learn to sing in days of gloom the songs that she learned in days of gladness.

I once spent the closing days of the old year at the homestead of Andrew Wallace, at Twilight Glen, near Mosgiel. Andrew was a sturdy young Scotsman who had been only ten or twelve years out from Ayrshire. He had married a New Zealand girl and they had two children, Ian and Pearl. I found the youngsters great fun. One evening they were showing me the presents that Santa Claus had brought them. The assortment included a picture-puzzle. We all set to work fitting together the fantastically shaped fragments; but as the task approached completion it became evident that some of the pieces were missing.

'Oh,' exclaimed Pearl, in impatient disgust, 'we must throw them all away; they're no good now!'

'Oh, yes they are,' replied her wiser brother, 'the other pieces may turn up some day; we'll keep these in the cupboard till they do!'

That is Habakkuk's argument exactly. When the soul is confronted by a perplexity that is too baffling for her, she is tempted to throw everything to the winds. But let her pause and think! Shall she fling away the answers to ninety-nine questions



simply because there is one problem that she cannot satisfactorily solve? Shall I hurl into the void my hoard of golden yesterdays simply because I cannot understand God's inscrutable to-morrows?

*To the watch-tower!* cries the prophet.

*To the ramparts!* says Hopeful's text.

When, at some one point, faith is assailed, the time has come to guard her priceless hoard.

#### IV

Habakkuk is the supreme example of the *Vigilance of Staggering Faith*. 'I will watch,' he says; 'I will watch to see what He says to me!' Habakkuk felt, as Christian and Hopeful did, that it would never do to go to sleep. When the problems of life prove baffling, faith must remain open-eyed, quick-witted, and alert. The explanation of the mystery may arrive at any moment, and it may emerge from the most unlikely quarter. Under such circumstances therefore, how can I consent to fold my hands or close my eyes or compose my mind to slumber? He who sleeps on the Enchanted Ground, the Shepherds said, will never wake again. He who complacently settles down in the midst of his doubts can never expect to again behold the beatific vision. 'I will watch!' said the prophet, 'I will watch!'

In the course of his Presidential Address at the annual meeting of the British Association, Sir

Michael Foster outlined the three qualifications that represent the essentials of a distinctively scientific spirit. The first is *absolute truthfulness*; the third is *moral courage*; and the second is '*alertness of mind; a mind ever on the watch; ready at once to lay hold of Nature's hint, however small; and to listen to Nature's whisper, however low.*'

Habakkuk's attitude could not have been more felicitously expressed. 'I cannot solve the problem,' he says, 'but I will keep my eyes wide open. I cannot read the riddle; but I will scan the whole horizon in search of the answer. I will watch, as a sentry watches, for any movement, any sign, any shadow that may denote the approach of the solution. Remembering that those who sleep among their doubts sleep to wake no more, I will give myself no rest nor slumber. My mind shall be vigilant, watchful, alert; ready to lay hold on any hint, however small, and to listen to any whisper, however low!' Such wakeful eyes are seldom cheated of the vision for which they so tirelessly and hungrily watch.

V

Habakkuk is the supreme example of the *Patience of a Staggering Faith*. 'Though it tarry, he says, '*I will wait for it.*' If often tarries. It did in Hopeful's case.

'And did the Father reveal the Son to you?'

'No, not at the first, nor second, nor third, nor

fourth, nor the fifth, no, nor at the sixth time neither.'

'Had you no thoughts of leaving off praying?'

'Yes, a hundred times twice told.'

The vision tarried; but Hopeful remembered Habakkuk. '*Though it tarry, wait for it.*' And, waiting, he soon found his heart full of joy, his eyes full of tears and his affections running over.

Patience was ever the golden key that opened the gates of vision. Richard Jefferies used to talk to his friends of the wonders he had seen in the woods—the pheasant down in the fern, the hare out in the open, the squirrel perched in the pine-trees, and the woodpecker up in the copse. As soon as they were at liberty to do so, his delighted hearers would set off to see these pretty creatures for themselves. But they invariably returned disappointed from their quest.

'We went to the fern and saw no pheasants,' they would complain; 'there was no squirrel in the pine-tree, no hare in the stubble, and no woodpecker in the copse! How is it that *you* saw these things and *we* didn't?'

'Because,' Jefferies would reply with a chuckle, 'because I didn't mind crouching for two hours in a wet ditch!'

Darwin watched his earthworms for twenty-nine years to learn the secrets with which he afterwards astonished the world. M. Fabre, the Virgil of the Insects,' was said to have been 'an incomparable

observer.' And, when he died, the *Times* remarked that, 'in this age of haste, his example was a valuable and lofty lesson. For seventy years he had bent over the same task, and he seemed to be telling those who were in a hurry to achieve a fleeting reputation that, in order to lay the foundations of a solid and durable monument, the whole life of a man is not too much.' The vision tarried, but he waited, and, by waiting, came to his own.

'Wait and see!' we say. To wait is to see. When John Linnell, the famous artist, was painting the picture that he regarded as his masterpiece, some of his friends displayed a tiresome anxiety to view it before it was ready. Linnell was particularly sensitive on the point, and, fearing that, in his absence, some curious visitor might invade the sanctity of his studio, he kept the easel veiled. And across the veil he threw a streamer bearing the inscription 'Wait and you shall see!'

That inscription across the veiled picture is the inscription that is written across all veiled things. Our mysteries yield to patience, and to patience only. Waiting is the secret of seeing. The vision that will banish my perplexities may tarry, says the prophet; but, *though it tarry, I will wait for it.*

VI

Habakkuk is the supreme example of the *Witness of a Staggering Faith*. The moment that the vision comes, he is prepared to pass it on. 'Write the

*vision and make it plain upon tables that he may run that readeth it.'* He stands, like a telegraphist at the receiver, interpreting the message, and simultaneously, preparing to despatch it. The moment that his own perplexities are scattered, the prophet will do his best to dispel the cheerless gloom of every other doubter.

'This was a revelation to your soul, indeed,' said Christian, after listening to Hopeful's affecting recital. 'Tell me particularly what effect this had upon your spirit!'

'It made me love a holy life and long to do something for the honour and glory of the Lord Jesus. Yea, I thought that, had I now a thousand gallons of blood in my body, I could spill it all for the sake of the Lord Jesus.'

Every man who, after long waiting and eager watching, has at last caught the vision that has filled his life with splendour, will sympathise and understand.



## XX

### MR. GLADSTONE'S TEXT

#### I

IN the year in which Queen Victoria was born, Mr. Gladstone celebrated his tenth birthday. In that year his mother wrote to tell a friend of hers, with unspeakable thankfulness, that her boy had been '*truly converted to God.*' Nobody has been able to trace the exact circumstances that prompted her to use that striking phrase. We only know that when that illustrious son of hers emerged from the privacy of his early home into the limelight of public notice, his faith was, as Lord Rosebery has finely put it, part of the very fibre of his being. In his monumental *Life of Gladstone*, Lord Morley quotes a sentence from the distinguished statesman's diary which, he says, is the biographic clue to his entire career. Mr. Gladstone inscribed that pregnant sentence in his diary at the age of twenty-one. 'In practice,' he says, '*the great thing is that the life of God may be the habit of my soul.*' He lived for nearly seventy years after that, and never for a moment swerved by a hairbreadth from his youthful ideal. Exactly fifty years later, I find him coveting

above all else, 'that personal and experimental communion of the human soul with God, which, profiting by all ordinances, is tied to none.' He longs, he says, 'for the faith that abides, through all its varying moods, in the inner court of that sanctuary whose walls are not built with hands.' This was his passion to the very end. 'On the tenth of May, 1898,' says the Bishop of St. Andrews, 'I knelt by his deathbed and received his parting benediction. As I turned away, I felt that I had been on the Mount of Transfiguration and had seen a glimpse of Paradise through the Gates Ajar.'

In those days Lord Rosebery and Lord Salisbury were the two outstanding personalities in the rival camps into which the political life of Great Britain was divided. On one subject their lordships were in perfect agreement.

'The world thought of Gladstone as a politician,' said Lord Rosebery, into whose hands Mr. Gladstone relinquished the leadership. 'To those of us who were privileged to enjoy his friendship, his politics seems but the least part of him. Indeed, I sometimes doubt whether his natural bent was towards politics at all. The predominating part, to which all else was subordinated, was his religion. An intimate and vital religious experience was the essence, the savour and the motive power of his whole life.'

'He has left behind him,' said Lord Salisbury, the Conservative Prime Minister, 'he has left be-

hind him the memory of a great Christian statesman. He will be remembered, not so much for the causes in which he was engaged, or the political projects which he favoured, but as an example, of which history hardly furnishes a parallel, of a great Christian man.'

## II

One of the most charming and revealing sketches of Mr. Gladstone's private and inner life is that which Lady Battersea has given us in her *Reminiscences*. She and her husband were often the guests of Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone at Hawarden. Lady Battersea tells of the quiet, old-world Sundays in the peaceful and beautiful home; she describes the pretty drive to the village church; she speaks of Mr. Gladstone as, with reverent and perfectly modulated voice, he read the lessons, and read them in such a way that every syllable was arresting and impressive; and she lets us overhear some of those heart-to-heart talks in which hours melted away like moments. After one of these delightful conversations, Lady Battersea handed Mr. Gladstone a book and begged him to inscribe it with a favourite motto or quotation. He did not hesitate for a second. Taking his pen he wrote out at once a verse from the seventeenth Psalm. *Keep me as the apple of Thine eye: hide me under the shadow of Thy wings.* The words are eminently characteristic; they gather to themselves the essential elements of that noble

faith which, according to all the witnesses, was the finest thing about him.

## III

Mr. Gladstone was a tremendous believer in the Unutterable Value of the Individual Soul. '*Keep me,*' cries the Psalmist, '*as the apple of Thine eye.*' 'The apple of the eye—that tenderest piece of the tenderest part!' says old John Trapp. 'What closeness of union with God that lovely figure implies,' says Dr. Maclaren, 'and what sedulous guardianship it implores!' The words mean, if they mean anything, that the soul is as precious to God as my eye is to me; and that God is as sensitive to any injury done to the soul as I am to any injury done to the apple of my eye. David believed that, and so did Mr. Gladstone.

It was, in his judgement, the only adequate explanation of all the facts of the case. It was the only adequate explanation of Jesus Christ; and, to him, Christ was the centre of everything. Christ was not merely an adornment of his religion, as a stained-glass window is an adornment of a church; Christ *was* his religion. 'Christianity is Christ,' he wrote to a gentleman at Manchester in 1877; and, eleven years later, he declared, in the columns of the *Nineteenth Century*, that 'Christianity without Christ is no Christianity.' He liked to think, he said, that that wondrous birth at Bethlehem 'brought righteousness out of the region of cold abstrac-

tions, clothed it in flesh and blood, opened for it the shortest way to all our sympathies; gave it the firmest command over the springs of human action, and, by incorporating it in a Person, made it lovable.'

The memorial to Mr. Gladstone at Hawarden bears a striking inscription. It is a sentence from his own pen:

*ALL I THINK, ALL I WRITE, ALL I AM, IS BASED ON THE DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST, THE CENTRAL HOPE OF OUR POOR WAYWARD RACE.*

'I was preaching in New York in 1893,' says Dr. Kerr Boyce Tupper, in explaining the origin of the words. 'The Mayor of the city was in the congregation, and said to me at the close, "I am intellectually convinced of the Deity of Christ, but it would be a buttress to my faith if I could have a declaration from a man like Mr. Gladstone." That afternoon I wrote to Mr. Gladstone, pointing out that this was no impertinent autograph hunt, but the honest appeal of a man who, in his own sphere, possessed all the possibilities of great usefulness. Within eighteen days I received from Mr. Gladstone the words of the inscription quoted on the Hawarden memorial. That Mayor is to-day leader of a class of a hundred and fifty young men.'

*Christianity is Christ, and without Christ there is no Christianity!*



*Jesus Christ, the Central Hope of our Poor Wayward Race!*

With all the force of his mighty intellect, and with all the intensity of his great soul, Mr. Gladstone believed in Jesus Christ and Him Crucified. 'I commend myself,' he says in his will, 'to the infinite mercies of God in the Incarnate Son, as my only and sufficient hope.' He stakes everything, for time and for eternity, on the redeeming efficacy of the Cross. But how can I explain the Saviour, and how can I explain His Cross, unless I believe with David that the individual soul is as precious to God as my eye is to me, and that God is as sensitive to any injury done to the soul as I am to any injury done to the apple of my eye?

'Shall I ever forget,' says the Bishop of St. Andrews, who shared Mr. Gladstone's most intimate and most sacred confidences, 'shall I ever forget an hour that we spent together in the library of Hawarden, which is for ever to me consecrated ground? He opened his inmost heart to me. He showed that he felt sin to be a horrible thing, a cursed thing, a thing that nailed the Son of God to the Cross; he regarded even the least sin as an abomination in the sight of God.' He believed with David that the tiniest sin that settled on his soul was as painful to God as the almost invisible speck of grit blown by the wind into his own eye. And therefore he prayed that he might be kept from contamination.

'Keep me,' he cried, '*keep me—keep me as the apple of Thine eye!*'

## IV

Mr. Gladstone was a tremendous believer in the Parental Care of God. '*Hide me,*' cried the Psalmist, whose words he adopted as his own, '*hide me under the shadow of Thy wings.*' It is the cry of the young bird to its mother. The outspread wings are its natural refuge. It loves to be sheltered; it loves to feel warm; it loves, above all, to be near.

Now, at first blush, the image scarcely seems fitting. We do not associate the emotions of a fledgling with commanding personalities like Mr. Gladstone. But humanity, in any of its various forms, is wonderfully human. It is the cry of the young bird, the cry for protection and warmth and the mother's caress, that Mr. Gladstone inscribes as his own in Lady Battersea's album. '*Hide me under the shadow of Thy wings.*' And anybody who cares to turn to the biographies of Gladstone will find this phase of the great statesman's faith constantly reflected there. He liked to feel that God was very near, and that, whenever he would he could shelter in the secret of His Presence. Mr. David Williamson has told us how Mr. Gladstone once took him over Hawarden. Over the bed there hung a text: *Underneath are the everlasting arms.* 'That,' exclaimed Mr. Gladstone, pointing to it, 'that is my greatest comfort!' It is the same thought under a

slightly changed image—the sheltering wings, the sustaining arms! Mr. Gladstone was always a child—a child revelling in the Parental love and care.

No passages in his diary are more impressive than those in which he tells of the texts which, in moments of anxiety and crisis, lifted his thoughts above the dust of earthly conflict into the very peace of heaven. All through life it was an infinite comfort and strength to him that his mind was drenched and saturated with the Scriptures. From boyhood he knew his Bible from cover to cover. In his diary I find this entry, written when he was twenty years of age. ‘Rode over to the mill at Kincairn to see Mackay: he was shot last night. He was suffering much and seemed near death. Read the Holy Scriptures to him’—and he mentions the six passages that he selected.

‘On most occasions of very sharp pressure or trial,’ he says, ‘some word of Scripture has come home to me as if borne on angels’ wings.’ Thus, in the winter of 1837, he tells us that the one hundred and twenty-eighth Psalm helped him in a most singular manner, although, he adds, it would be a long story to tell. In connexion with every momentous happening in his eventful life, he tells of the passage that flashed into his mind, bringing courage and comfort and peace. When, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, he rose to deliver his first Budget speech in the House of Commons, he remembered

and silently repeated the Psalmist's prayer, '*O turn Thee unto me, and have mercy upon me: give Thy strength unto Thy servant, and help the son of Thine handmaid.*' During the anxious days of the Crimean War, the Twenty-third Psalm sang its shepherd song unceasingly within his soul.

At length, in his sixtieth year, he became Prime Minister—the greatest honour that can fall to the lot of any Englishman. And how did he receive it? He felt that he needed the divine help as he had never needed it before. *Hide me*, he cried, from the very depths of his soul, *hide me under the shadow of Thy wings*. He at once sought his friend, the Bishop of St. Andrews, and asked that he might enter into a realization of his Lord's presence at the Communion Table. 'I remember him coming,' says the Bishop, 'as he always did on every emergency, great or small. To see him at Communion was to have an object-lesson in adoring worship. I see him now as he knelt there that day. His soul was literally feeding on the Body and Blood of Christ. Communicants went up and came back; but he remained absorbed in fellowship with his Saviour. He was there till the end of the service. He had lost all thought of man.'

There, then, he is! Like the young bird that, at every unwonted sight and at every disturbing sound, seeks the brooding shelter of its mother's wing, he allows every new experience to drive him into the secret of the Divine Presence. '*Hide me,*'

he cries, over and over and over again, '*hide me under the shadow of Thy wings.*'

## V

Mr. Gladstone had a tremendous consciousness of his deep and incessant need. 'Keep me,' he cried with the Psalmist, 'keep me, keep me!' 'Hide me,' he cried with the Psalmist, 'hide me, hide me!'—*keep me as the apple of Thine eye: hide me under the shadow of Thy wings!*

I find that profound consciousness of personal need in some of the earliest entries in his diary: it was with him to the last. When he lay dying, Mrs. Benson, the widow of the Archbishop Benson, went to see him. 'Mrs. Drew told him,' she says, 'that it was I. He took my hand and kissed it, and then said: "God bless you. Will you give me your prayers?" I told him that he always had them—that I prayed for him continually. "Nobody," he answered, "nobody needs them more than the poor sinner who lies here before you!"'

'*A great Christian!*' exclaimed Lord Salisbury in the House of Lords, a few days later, 'an example of which history hardly furnishes a parallel of a great Christian man!'

'*A poor sinner!*' he himself cries, on his death-bed, 'nobody needs your prayers more than the poor sinner who lies here before you!'

When he received the Communion for the last time he remained in bed until the time came for the



confession and the absolution. And then, although ordered to remain there, he insisted on rising and receiving on his knees the assurance of forgiveness and the holy emblems of his Saviour's body and blood.

'Keep me,' he cried, 'keep me! In life and in death, *keep me as the apple of Thine eye!*'

'Hide me,' he cried, 'hide me! In life and in death, *hide me under the shadow of Thy wings!*'

That two-fold cry was wonderfully answered. He prayed to be kept; and his life was an example of stainless purity. 'As a boy at Eton,' says one who knew him there, 'he trained himself with hard discipline, and would never allow his eyes to look, or his mind to dwell, on anything that was not pure and lovely. He was like a young knight girding on his armour for a life-long effort.' His purity was an infectious purity: it made others pure. 'I was a thoroughly idle boy at school,' says the Bishop of Salisbury, 'but I was saved from worse things by getting to know Gladstone.' As a young man in London, he was horrified by the tragedies of the city streets, and he solemnly vowed that he would never rest until he had won back to purity and gladness some of the women whose lives had been wrecked by the selfishness of men. At Oxford he set his heart upon entering the ministry. 'He was nearer to being a clergyman than I was,' says Cardinal Manning, 'and he was as fit for it as I was unfit.' 'Keep me!' he cried; and he was so perfectly kept

that the Right Hon. G. W. E. Russell declares that 'if ever we are tempted to despond about the possibilities of human nature, we shall bethink ourselves of him. If ever our faith should be perplexed by blank misgivings, the memory of his strong confidence will reassure us.' So completely was he kept!

He prayed to be hidden—'*hide me under the shadow of Thy wings!*' And no man ever dwelt more intimately in the secret place of the Most High or abode more constantly under the shadow of the Almighty. 'Rock of Ages' was ever his favourite hymn. He loved to sing it, to recite it, and to translate it into other languages. It was but another way of praying his familiar prayer:

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,  
Let me hide myself in Thee!

*Hide me under the shadow of Thy wings!* Let me hide myself in Thee! And when he 'soared to worlds unknown' and 'stood before the Judgement Throne,' his old petition was still upon his lips.

## XXI

### JOHN NELSON'S TEXT

#### I

SOUTHEY says that John Nelson had as high a spirit and as brave a heart as ever Englishman was blessed with. And Southey knew something about high spirits and brave hearts. For Southey had already written the standard biography of Lord Nelson, the greatest sailor since the world began. Yet, after having considered all the classic and heroic examples of that adventurous period, Southey is of the deliberate opinion that John Nelson, the sturdy Yorkshire stone-mason, is second in courage to none of them. Square-headed and square-shouldered was John Nelson, of stalwart frame and tough sinews and rugged speech. I seem to see him now with his massive countenance, his heavy chin, his high forehead, his piercing eyes and his wealth of long brown hair. In preaching, he uses a washtub, mouth downwards, for a pulpit; his hammer is stuck in the string of his leather apron to one side, and his trowel on the other. Later on I see him again, wearing his picturesque three-cornered hat, his blue frock coat and knee-breeches, his stiff high collar and his white cravat. His eyes twinkle with

good humour and his soul is rich in commonsense. He is a man who knows his own mind; he likes deeds better than words. When applying for work on one occasion, he was asked whether he could carve a pig-trough. Asking for a block of stone, he carved on it a sow feeding her litter; and was instantly engaged. That was his style. His story, as Dr. Fitchett says, is as moving a bit of English as is to be found in the literature of the eighteenth century; and his valiant pilgrimage constitutes itself one of the golden memories of that stirring time. A very gallant gentleman was John Nelson.

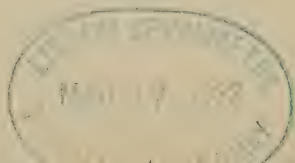
## II

Bunyan speaks of the Three Shining Ones that the Pilgrims saw at the Cross. The Three Shining Ones that led John Nelson into the Kingdom of Christ were three texts. The *first* filled him with unutterable dread; the *second* inspired a pleasing hope; and the *third* overwhelmed him with a joy unspeakable and full of glory.

I. The *First* Shining One—the text that *frightened* him—broke upon his startled vision when he was only a boy. It was a Sunday evening; the household had gathered for family worship; and John curled himself up on the floor at his father's feet. Mr. Nelson read, from the twentieth chapter of the Book of Revelation, of the Great White Throne and of the host of the dead, small and great, standing before it. 'The word came with such light

and power to my soul,' Nelson tells us, 'that it made me tremble, as if a dart were shot at my heart. I fell with my face on the floor, and wept till the place was as wet where I lay as if water had been poured thereon. As my father proceeded, I thought I saw everything he read about, though my eyes were shut; and the sight was so terrible I was about to stop my ears that I might not hear, but I durst not; as soon as I put my fingers in my ears I pulled them back again. The words made me cringe and my flesh seemed to creep on my bones. I shed many tears in private; yet, when I returned to my companions, I wiped my face and went back again to my folly. But,' he significantly adds, 'Oh the hell that I found in my mind when I was alone!'

The *Second* Shining One—the text that whispered to his distracted soul its message of *hope*—delayed its coming for more than twenty years. It is Sunday, June 17, 1739—a notable date in the experience of John Nelson, and a notable date in the experience of John Wesley. On this morning, at seven o'clock, Mr. Wesley preaches his first sermon at Moorfields. Early as is the hour, a vast concourse has assembled. John Wesley, hating exaggerations, computes it at six or seven thousand; his brother, Charles Wesley, estimates that there are nearly ten. John Nelson is among them. He is now thirty-two years of age, but he has never succeeded in shaking off the deep concern that crept into his heart that Sunday evening in his boyhood's





home. He has been to hear many preachers. 'I tried all but the Jews,' he says; 'I thought it was to no purpose to go to them.' Even George Whitefield failed to comfort him. 'He was to me as a man who could play well on an instrument; his preaching was pleasant unto me, and I loved the man; but I did not understand him.' Then came John Wesley. 'I was like a wandering bird, cast out of the nest,' he says, 'till Mr. John Wesley came to preach his first sermon in Moorfields. Oh, that was a blessed morning to my soul! As soon as he got upon the stand, he stroked back his hair, and turned his face towards where I stood, and, I thought, fixed his eyes upon me. His countenance struck such an awful dread upon me, before I heard him speak, that it made my heart beat like the pendulum of a clock; and, when he did speak, I thought his whole discourse was aimed at me.' Mr. Wesley preached that morning, I find, from his *Journal*, on the fifty-fifth of Isaiah: '*Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters! Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.*' The text was always a favourite of Mr. Wesley's. It was, indeed, the text of the last sermon that he ever preached: but that was more than fifty years later. At about this time he preached on this same text at Kenning-

ton, and a soldier was in the crowd. 'His words made me tremble,' this man said. 'I thought he spoke to no one but me, and I durst not look up; for I imagined all the people were looking at me. But before Mr. Wesley concluded his sermon, he cried out: *Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.* "If that be true," said I, "I will turn to God to-day!"' But the sermon which thus led the soldier into the Promised Land only led John Nelson within sight of it. 'When Mr. Wesley had done,' he says, 'I felt that he had read the secrets of my heart, and shown me the remedy, even the blood of Jesus. Then was my soul filled with consolation through hope that God, for Christ's sake, would save me.' From that moment, John Nelson, not having received the promise, had, nevertheless, seen it afar off, and saluted it and confessed that he was a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth.

The *Third Shining One*—the text by means of which 'the Lord,' as he says, 'wrote a pardon on my heart'—revealed its beauty to him three months later. It was the greatest day of his life, a day so crowded with spiritual discovery and religious emotion that I cannot tell with certainty whether the text actually opened to him the gates of the kingdom, or simply announced that they stood wide open. 'All that day,' he tells us, 'I neither ate nor

drank anything: for, *before* I found peace, the hand of God was so heavy upon me that I refused to eat; and, *after* I found peace, I was so filled with the manna of redeeming love that I had no need of the bread that perisheth.' Of the momentous experiences of that memorable day, the text was the concrete embodiment and natural expression. 'In the afternoon,' he says, 'I opened the Book where it is written: *Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.* I was so affected that I could not read for weeping.'

The work of the Three Shining Ones was complete. His heart had shown them noble hospitality. With all the hosts of shining ones, they folded their wings and took up their abode in the soul.

'*Oh, the hell that I find in my heart when I am alone!*' he cried once.

'*Heaven in the heart! Heaven in the heart!*' he says to-day.

### III

The text that flooded the heart of this sturdy Yorkshireman with such uncontrollable emotion stands like a City Foursquare. John Nelson walked about it; told the towers thereof; marked well its bulwarks and considered its palaces; that he might tell it to the generation following. So will we.

And, viewing this fair city from the *North*, I am impressed by the *acclamation of Love*: '*Unto Him*

*that loved be the glory!*' John saw, he tells us, that the ultimate glory will be ascribed, not to wealth, nor to power, nor to fame, but to love; and he saw that, since the Lord Jesus Christ has hopelessly out-distanced all his competitors in the divine art of loving, the final adjudication must inevitably lay the triumphs and trophies of the ages at His feet.

Viewing the city from the *South*, I am impressed by the *Anguish of Love*: '*Unto Him that loved us and washed us in His own blood.*'

*His own blood!* It was this that touched to the quick the heart of John Nelson when he heard Mr. Wesley at Moorfields that early Sunday morning. 'He showed me the remedy, even *the blood of Jesus.*' If it were possible for us to hear these stupendous syllables—with *His own blood*—as though we heard them for the first time, or with the force and freshness with which they appealed to John Nelson that day, we should catch in every accent and syllable a throb out of the eternities, a sob out of the very heart of God. For these two—Passion and Pain, Affection and Anguish—God hath joined together and no man can put them asunder. Love ever marches to its triumphs by way of pitch-black Gethsemanes and blood-red Golgothas, yet ever marches with radiant face and with a song upon its lips. The footmarks on the track along which love has gone always show the print of the nails. The love-letters of the kingdom of heaven are all of them written in red.

Viewing the city from the *East*, I am impressed by the *Achievements of Love*: '*Unto Him that washed us and made us kings.*'

Those are the eternal credentials of love. Love must lave and love must lift. Someone may remind me that it is a law of mechanics that two persons cannot lift each other at the same time. I can only reply that there is a loftier law than the law of mechanics. By the law of love two persons may simulatneously love each other into a rarer, richer and purer atmosphere. They may love each other nearer heaven.

And, viewing this noble city from the *West*, I am impressed by the *Accession of Love*: '*Unto Him that loved be the glory and the dominion.*'

Love is coming to the throne! It does one good to think of it, to speak of it, to dream of it. This prisoner at Patmos, in his radiant Apocalypse, saw that, in the end of the ages, love is coming to its own at last. After having for countless centuries been insulted by sensualists, degraded by materialists, and caricatured by novelists, love will at length inherit the glory and the dominion!

'When I opened the Book and came upon these words,' says John Nelson, 'I was so affected that I could not read for weeping!' I am not surprised.

#### IV

John Nelson's text represents, not merely the instrument of his conversion, but the temper and



spirit of his life. Charles Simeon, one of the choicest spirits of his age, took the passage as his motto and ideal. 'The words,' he says, 'the words "*Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever*" express the very frame of mind in which I wish both to live and to die.' It was in that sublime frame of mind that John Nelson lived his heroic life and died his triumphant death.

*'Unto Him that loved be the glory!'* Love was the splendour of John Nelson's life. As soon as he passes from the story of his conversion, I find his journal dotted with such entries as these. 'My wife began to be concerned about the salvation of her soul.' 'My wife was thoroughly convinced and her heart was filled with peace and love.' 'My own brother was brought to experience the redeeming love of Christ!' 'My mother was the first ripe fruit that God gave me of my labour.' 'Another of my brothers, my aunt, and two cousins were converted.' And, later, 'my granddaughter rejoices in the Lord.' He paid men to go and hear Mr. Wesley preach. He recoiled from the thought of preaching himself. 'I would rather be hanged!' he said. Yet, as the conviction deepened within him that by preaching he might save others, he yielded; and his voice soon rang through the country.

*'With His own Blood!'* John Nelson shared his

Lord's crucifixion. He often preached with the blood streaming down his face and the stones whistling past his ears. He saw his wife mercilessly thrashed by the mob and his unborn child thereby killed. The authorities, hoping to silence him, delivered him to the press-gang and flung him into a dungeon 'that stunk worse than a hog-stye by reason of the blood and filth which came from the slaughter-house above.' He was often so maltreated that his friends thought he was dead. But, through it all, his faith never faltered. 'In the dungeon,' he says, 'my soul was so filled with the love of God that it was paradise to me!' And he told the story of redeeming love to all who came near him.

John Nelson's text is a Doxology. Unto Him that loves us with a love that no time can end and that no waters can quench; unto Him that laves us from our old black sins in His own atoning blood; unto Him that lifts us on to the high levels of the Christian life and will yet lift us beyond the stars of God; unto Him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever! John Nelson carried the noble music of that rich doxology into the discords and drudgeries of eighteenth-century England; and, as all the historians confess, England was a sweeter, better, gladder place in consequence.

## XXII

### HARRIET BEECHER STOWE'S TEXT

#### I

IN a modest dwelling on the outskirts of the city of Rome, overlooking the shining waters of the Tiber, old Father Issachar lay dying, attended only by his daughter Ruth, a woman no longer young. It was towards the close of the first century. Issachar and Ruth had been among the earliest converts to the faith; indeed, they had been received into the Church at Jerusalem during the great Pentecostal ingathering. For their faith they had suffered much; and it was in the dispersion that resulted from that pitiless persecution that they had been driven into Italy. There were times, especially in his later years, when the mind of Issachar went back almost wistfully to the days of his youth. 'To how great splendour,' Dr. F. B. Meyer exclaims, 'had these Hebrew Christians been accustomed—marbled courts, throngs of white-robed Levites, splendid vestments, the state and pomp of symbol ceremonial and choral psalm! And to what a contrast were they reduced—a meeting in some hall or school with the poor, afflicted, and persecuted members of a despised and

hated sect!' Who can wonder that, in his infirmity, Issachar should ponder the ornate ritual that had so often impressed his youth?

And Issachar was dying! For some months he had been unable to attend the sanctuary. He had, however, insisted on Ruth's going; and she had carefully repeated to her father on her return the words of hope and grace to which she had herself listened. And of late her story had been particularly interesting to him. For her heart was full of a wonderful letter that, in sections, the minister was reading to his faithful people. It was a letter addressed to Jewish converts, pointing out to them the incalculable wealth of their invisible inheritance and imploring them to remain steadfast in their new faith. As a rule, Ruth trusted to her memory; but one day the reading seemed so majestic and affecting that she asked permission to remain behind and copy out the sentences that had so impressed her in order that she might convey them in their integrity to her aged father. The words that she copied were these:

*For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest.*

*And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more.*

*(For they could not endure that which was commanded. And if so much as a beast touch the moun-*

*tain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart.*

*And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.)*

*But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels.*

*To the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.*

*And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*

And when she read them to Issachar, the old man's face became radiant.

'Yes, yes,' he exclaimed, 'there come times when we children of the covenant look back to the old days and the old order; and we fancy that we relinquished more than we afterwards received. But, oh, Ruth, it is a great and terrible delusion! We only gave up the shadow because we had found the substance.'

Every day Issachar implored his daughter to bring to his bedside her worn but precious manuscript; and every day the words grew in meaning to him.

'Yes,' he exclaimed one day, 'we gave up the shadow because we had found the substance. We gave up the material—the mount that could be touched—for the spiritual—Sion, radiant with light and gladness. We gave up the revelation that was



clouded and obscure for a revelation that a child can understand. We gave up a revelation that was narrow and exclusive—only Moses was allowed to draw nigh—for a revelation that is all-embracing and universal. We gave up a revelation that was terrible and forbidding—even Moses exceedingly feared and quaked—for a revelation that is all grace and pity and love. We gave up a revelation that shut us out for a revelation that takes us all in. *“Ye are come to Mount Sion—ye are come to God the Judge of all—ye are come to Jesus!”* The holiest is open to the lowliest! There was nothing in the old order to be compared with that!

The old man insisted on having the golden sentences read to him on the day on which he died; and, to the end of her own life, Ruth pondered their profound significance with ever-increasing delight.

To a Jew the words add a new glory to the thought of the invisible and eternal *‘Ye are come . . .’*; he has not to rely upon the appearance within the veil of the priest on his behalf; he may stand for himself in the holiest of all. *‘Ye are come . . .’*; his entrance upon his eternal inheritance is not a possibility of the future; it is an experience of the living present. The feet of the believing Jew are on Mount Sion; he is already a citizen of the heavenly Jerusalem; he is a member of the general assembly and church of the first-born; cohorts of angels attend him at every step. *‘Ye are come to God . . . Ye are come to Jesus’*; the way is open; the door

stands wide; man holds rapt, familiar intercourse with God!

To a Hebrew mind the words impart, moreover, a new splendour to the thought of immortality. Every Jew had some vague expectation of a life beyond the grave. The Old Testament seemed to encourage such a confidence. But the language was scarcely calculated to awaken enthusiasm. No Jew ever went into transports over the promise of immortality contained in the ancient documents. But how different was this! It fills in the blanks. It irradiates the dim and shadowy hope. The new phraseology compares with the old as a painting of the sunset by Turner compares with a mere photograph of the same sublime spectacle. The ancient scriptures led a Jew to expect some ghostly existence beyond the chilly darkness of the grave: the glowing message of the new revelation made him feel that, after death, he would find himself surrounded by an innumerable company of angels; he would hold high converse with prophets and patriarchs; he would gaze with unveiled face upon the exalted and glorified Person of his Redeemer.

## II

But the stirring phrases do not confine their uplifting ministry to the Jews of a day that is dead. 'That Scripture is worth a thousand thousand thoughts,' exclaimed Richard Baxter, on his death-bed, when these majestic sentences were read to

him. 'At another time,' says John Bunyan, Baxter's great contemporary, 'at another time there fell upon me a great cloud of thick darkness which did so hide from me the things of God that I was as if I had never known them. I was as if my bones were broken or as if my hands and feet had been tied or bound with chains.' 'I lay long at Sinai,' he says in another passage, 'and saw the fire and the cloud and the darkness.' 'But,' he adds, 'after I had been some three or four days in this condition, as I was sitting by the fire, I suddenly felt this word to sound in my heart: *I must go to Jesus!* At this my former darkness fled away and the blessed things of heaven were set in my view. "Wife," said I, on being thus surprised, "is there ever such a scripture, *I must go to Jesus?*" She said she could not tell; therefore I sat musing still to see if I could remember such a passage. But I had not sat above two or three minutes when there came bolting in upon me, *And to an innumerable company of angels . . . and to God . . . and to Jesus;* and withal, the twelfth of Hebrews, about Mount Sion, was set before mine eyes.

'Then, with joy, I told my wife, "O, now I know, I know!" That night was a good night to me; I never had but few better; I longed for the company of some of God's people that I might have imparted unto them what God had showed me. Christ was a precious Christ to my soul that night; I could scarce lie in my bed for joy and peace and triumph. This

great glory did not continue, yet the twelfth of Hebrews about Mount Sion was a blessed scripture to me for many days together after this.

'The words are these: *Ye are come to Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven; and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.* Through this blessed sentence the Lord led me over and over, first to this word, and then to that; and showed me wonderful glory in every one of them. These words also have oft since that time been great refreshment to my spirit. Blessed be God for having mercy on me.'

### III

Now if these golden words are as full of grace and power as this old Jew of the first century, and this immortal dreamer of the seventeenth, would lead us to suppose, they ought by this time to have demonstrated their transforming efficacy on the broader fields of history. But have they? 'The death knell of American slavery,' says David Livingstone, in writing to his daughter Agnes, 'the death knell of American slavery was rung by a woman's hand.' And what was it that moved the soul of Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe to that great

historic task? She has herself told us. The most formative influence in her life, she says, was the influence of her mother; and she could never think of her mother without thinking of her mother's text. 'For,' she says, 'there was one passage of scripture always associated with her in our childish minds. It was this: "*For ye are not come unto the mount that burned with fire, nor unto blackness and darkness and tempest; but ye are come unto Mount Sion, the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.*" We all knew,' Mrs. Stowe continues, 'that this was what our father repeated to her when she was dying, and we often repeated it to each other. It was to *that* we felt we must attain, though we scarcely knew how. In every scene of family joy or sorrow, or when father wished to make an appeal to our hearts that he knew we could not resist, he spoke of mother!'

The book by means of which Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe contrived to infect the world with her own implacable hatred of slavery is drenched from cover to cover with the noble thought embedded in the text. When, for example, little Eva lies dying, with Uncle Tom sitting sadly beside her, she speaks of the heavenly Jerusalem, and of the innumerable company of angels, and of Jesus. And Uncle Tom's eyes sparkle at every word. For,



though a slave, Uncle Tom has learned to love with all his heart and strength and soul the sacred things that are so precious to his frail young mistress. He, like her, has entered into the unsearchable riches of Christ. The argument is obvious and unanswerable. If a slave can *come to Mount Sion and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus*, how can you set him up on an auction block and sell him, body and soul, from one white man to another? That was the sublime discovery that underlay the abolition of slavery.

## IV

‘I lay long at Sinai!’ says John Bunyan. Sinai the mount that might be touched and that burned with fire, covered with blackness and darkness and tempest! And so horrible was the sight that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake! ‘I lay long at Sinai!’ Too long, perhaps! For, in *Pilgrim’s Progress*, the road to the Cross seems to be a needlessly tiresome and tedious one. The text comforts us by telling us that, in point of fact, we need not visit Sinai at all! ‘*Ye are not come to the mount that might be touched and that burned with fire, but ye are come unto Mount Sion and to Jesus.*’ We all feel that we were present at that memorable

Kirk Session at Drumtochty, which Ian Maclaren has so vividly described. Jessie, aspiring to be numbered among the young communicants, is before the elders, and is being examined. Burnbrae asks her a few questions, and is satisfied. Burnbrae is a big-hearted man, with a fatherly manner, and Jessie said afterwards that he treated her as if she were his ain bairn. But after Burnbrae comes Lachlan Campbell. Lachlan stands for inflexible justice. He soon has poor Jessie on the rack.

‘How old will you be?’

‘Ouchteen next Martinmas.’

‘And why will you be coming to the Sacrament?’

‘Ma mother thought it was time,’ with a threatening of tears, as she looks at the harsh face of Lachlan Campbell.

‘Ye will, maybe, tell the Session what has been your law-work, and *how long ye haf been at Sinai.*’

‘I dinna ken what yir askin’,’ replies Jessie, breaking down utterly. ‘I was never out o’ Drumtochty!’

*Sinai!* Here was a mountain peak to so suddenly confront the astonished gaze of a young communicant! *Sinai*, the mount that burned with fire, the mount that was swathed in blackness and darkness and tempest!

‘I lay long at Sinai!’ says Bunyan.

‘How long haf ye been at Sinai!’ asks Lachlan Campbell of poor Jessie.

But Jessie need not be ashamed or confounded beneath the old elder’s cross-examination.

*'Ye are not come to the mount that burned with fire,'* says the text, *'but ye are come to Mount Sion.'* And Jessie is able to convince the elders that, though the first is a foreign territory to her, she is perfectly at home in the second. She has *come to Jesus, the Mediator of the new Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel,* and, as a consequence, *she has come to Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect.*

'I move,' says Burnbrae, as Jessie stands weeping and discomfited, 'I move, Moderator, that she get her token. Dinna greet, lassie, for ye've done weel, and the Session's rael satisfied.' The motion is carried, and Jessie goes away comforted.

I should like to have seen Jessie on the day of that first communion of hers. Ian Maclaren says nothing about it, but, somehow, I fancy that the communion hymn on that never-to-be-forgotten Sabbath was Mrs. Alexander's

There is a green hill far away,  
Without a city wall,  
Where the dear Lord was crucified  
Who died to save us all.

And when she joined with wavering, tremulous voice in singing that lovely hymn, Jessie forgot all

about Lachlan Campbell's uncomfortable questions. She felt—as we all feel—that, once the eyes have rested on *that* green and holy hill, no other mountain, however lofty, is worth worrying about.

Even Moses, the only person permitted to approach it, exceedingly feared and quaked as he drew near to the mount that burned with fire; but the beauty of the gospel is that a wayfaring man, though a fool, may find his way to Mount Sion; a dying thief may enter Paradise side by side with his Lord; and the heavenly city is 'full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof.'









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